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The Kitáb-i-Aqdas

by Bahá’u’lláh

Edition 1, (June 21, 2005)

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Preface

In 1953 Shoghi Effendi, the Guardian of the Bahá'í Faith, included as one of the goals of his Ten Year Plan the preparation of a Synopsis and Codification of the Laws and Ordinances of the Kitáb-i-Aqdas as an essential prelude to its translation. He himself worked on the codification, but had not finished it when he died in 1957. The task was continued on the basis of his work, and the resulting volume was released in 1973. That publication included, in addition to the Synopsis and Codification itself and explanatory notes, a compilation of the passages from the Kitáb-i-Aqdas which had already been translated by Shoghi Effendi and published in various books. The Synopsis and Codification covered the text of both the Kitáb-i-Aqdas and the Questions and Answers which constitutes an appendix to the Aqdas. In 1986 the Universal House of Justice decided that the time had come when the preparation of an English translation of the complete text of the Most Holy Book was both possible and essential and made its accomplishment a goal of the Six Year Plan 1986-1992. Its publication in English will be followed by translations in other languages.

It has been recognized that the Kitáb-i-Aqdas, being Sacred Scripture, should be presented in a form which can be read with ease and inspiration, uncluttered with the footnotes and index numbers that are common in scholarly texts. Nonetheless, to assist the reader in following the flow of the text and its changing themes, paragraph divisions have been added—such divisions not being common in works of Arabic literature—and these paragraphs have then[pg viii] been numbered for ease of access and indexing, as well as for uniformity of reference in all the languages in which the work will be published.

Following the text of the Aqdas is a brief compilation of Writings of Bahá'u'lláh which are supplementary to the Most Holy Book, and a translation of the Questions and Answers published here for the first time.

Shoghi Effendi had stated that the English translation of the Aqdas should be "copiously annotated". The policy followed in preparing the notes has been to concentrate on those points which might strike a non-Arabic-speaking reader as obscure or which, for various reasons, require elucidation or background information. They are not intended to be a comprehensive commentary on the text beyond these fundamental requirements.

The notes, which are placed following the Synopsis and Codification, are numbered sequentially. Each is preceded by a quotation of the passage to which it relates, and indicates the number of the paragraph in which this appears. This facilitates cross-reference between the text and the notes, while making it possible for readers to study the notes without repeatedly consulting the text, if they so prefer. It is hoped in this way to meet the needs of readers of a wide range of backgrounds and interests.

The index provides a guide to subjects in all sections of the volume.

The significance and character of the Kitáb-i-Aqdas and the range of subjects it contains have been graphically depicted by Shoghi Effendi in his history of the first Bahá'í century entitled God Passes By. As an assistance to the reader, these passages are provided in the section that immediately follows the introduction. The Synopsis and Codification, which is republished in this volume, serves as another aid for obtaining an overview of the Book.

Introduction

This year, the 149th of the Bahá'í era, marks the Centenary of the Ascension of Bahá'u'lláh, Bearer of the universal Revelation of God destined to lead humanity to its collective coming of age. That this occasion should be observed by a community of believers representing a cross-section of the entire human race and established, in the course of a century and a half, in the most remote corners of the globe, is a token of the forces of unity released by Bahá'u'lláh's advent. A further testimony to the operation of these same forces can be seen in the extent to which Bahá'u'lláh's vision has prefigured contemporary human experience in so many of its aspects. It is a propitious moment for the publication of this first authorized translation into English of the Mother Book of His Revelation, His "Most Holy Book", the Book in which He sets forth the Laws of God for a Dispensation destined to endure for no less than a thousand years.

Of the more than one hundred volumes comprising the sacred Writings of Bahá'u'lláh, the Kitáb-i-Aqdas is of unique importance. "To build anew the whole world" is the claim and challenge of His Message, and the Kitáb-i-Aqdas is the Charter of the future world civilization that Bahá'u'lláh has come to raise up. Its provisions rest squarely on the foundation established by past religions, for, in the words of Bahá'u'lláh, "This is the changeless Faith of God, eternal in the past, eternal in the future." In this Revelation the concepts of the past are brought to a new level of understanding, and the social laws, changed to suit the age [pg 2]now dawning, are designed to carry humanity forward into a world civilization the splendours of which can as yet be scarcely imagined.

In its affirmation of the validity of the great religions of the past, the Kitáb-i-Aqdas reiterates those eternal truths enunciated by all the Divine Messengers: the unity of

God, love of one's neighbour, and the moral purpose of earthly life. At the same time it removes those elements of past religious codes that now constitute obstacles to the emerging unification of the world and the reconstruction of human society.

The Law of God for this Dispensation addresses the needs of the entire human family. There are laws in the Kitáb-i-Aqdas which are directed primarily to the members of a specific section of humanity and can be immediately understood by them but which, at first reading, may be obscure to people of a different culture. Such, for example, is the law prohibiting the confession of sins to a fellow human being which, though understandable by those of Christian background, may puzzle others. Many laws relate to those of past Dispensations, especially the two most recent ones, those of Muḥammad and the Báb embodied in the Qur'án and the Bayán. Nevertheless, although certain ordinances of the Aqdas have such a focused reference, they also have universal implications. Through His Law, Bahá'u'lláh gradually unveils the significance of the new levels of knowledge and behaviour to which the peoples of the world are being called. He embeds His precepts in a setting of spiritual commentary, keeping ever before the mind of the reader the principle that these laws, no matter the subject with which they deal, serve the manifold purposes of bringing tranquillity to human society, raising the standard of human behaviour, increasing the range of human understanding, and spiritualizing the life of each and all. Throughout, it is the relationship of the individual soul to God and the fulfilment of its spiritual destiny that is [pg 3]the ultimate aim of the laws of religion. "Think not", is Bahá'u'lláh's own assertion, "that We have revealed unto you a mere code of laws. Nay, rather, We have unsealed the choice Wine with the fingers of might and power." His Book of Laws is His "weightiest testimony unto all people, and the proof of the All-Merciful unto all who are in heaven and all who are on earth".

An introduction to the spiritual universe unveiled in the Kitáb-i-Aqdas would fail in its purpose if it did not acquaint the reader with the interpretive and legislative institutions that Bahá'u'lláh has indissolubly linked with the system of law thus revealed. At the foundation of this guidance lies the unique role which Bahá'u'lláh's Writings —indeed the text of the Kitáb-i-Aqdas itself—confer on His eldest son, 'Abdu'l-Bahá. This unique figure is at once the Exemplar of the pattern of life taught by His Father, the divinely inspired authoritative Interpreter of His Teachings and the Centre and Pivot of the Covenant which the Author of the Bahá'í Revelation made with all who recognize Him. The twenty-nine years of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's ministry endowed the Bahá'í world with a luminous body of commentary that opens multiple vistas of understanding on His Father's purpose.

In His Will and Testament 'Abdu'l-Bahá conferred the mantle of Guardian of the Cause and infallible Interpreter of its teachings upon His eldest grandson, Shoghi Effendi, and confirmed the authority and guarantee of divine guidance decreed by Bahá'u'lláh for the Universal House of Justice on all matters "which have not outwardly been revealed in the Book". The Guardianship and the Universal House of Justice can thus be seen to be, in the words of Shoghi Effendi, the "Twin Successors" of Bahá'u'lláh and 'Abdu'l-Bahá. They are the supreme institutions of the Administrative Order which was founded and anticipated in the Kitáb-i-Aqdas and elaborated by 'Abdu'l-Bahá in His Will.

During the thirty-six years of his ministry, Shoghi Effendi raised up the structure of elected Spiritual Assemblies—[pg 4]the Houses of Justice referred to in the Kitáb-i-Aqdas, now in their embryonic stage—and with their collaboration initiated the systematic implementation of the Divine Plan that 'Abdu'l-Bahá had laid out for the diffusion of the Faith throughout the world. He also set in motion, on the basis of the strong administrative structure that had been established, the processes which were an

essential preparation for the election of the Universal House of Justice. This body, which came into existence in April 1963, is elected through secret ballot and plurality vote in a three-stage election by adult Bahá'ís throughout the world. The revealed Word of Bahá'u'lláh, together with the interpretations and expositions of the Centre of the Covenant and the Guardian of the Cause, constitute the binding terms of reference of the Universal House of Justice and are its bedrock foundation.

As to the laws themselves, a careful scrutiny discloses that they govern three areas: the individual's relationship to God, physical and spiritual matters which benefit the individual directly, and relations among individuals and between the individual and society. They can be grouped under the following headings: prayer and fasting; laws of personal status governing marriage, divorce and inheritance; a range of other laws, ordinances and prohibitions, as well as exhortations; and the abrogation of specific laws and ordinances of previous Dispensations. A salient characteristic is their brevity. They constitute the kernel of a vast range of law that will arise in centuries to come. This elaboration of the law will be enacted by the Universal House of Justice under the authority conferred upon it by Bahá'u'lláh Himself. In one of His Tablets 'Abdu'l-Bahá elucidates this principle:

> Those matters of major importance which constitute the foundation of the Law of God are explicitly recorded in the Text, but subsidiary laws are left to the House of Justice. The wisdom of this is that the times never remain the same, for [pg 5]change is a necessary quality and an essential attribute of this world, and of time and place. Therefore the House of Justice will take action accordingly...
>
> Briefly, this is the wisdom of referring the laws of society to the House of Justice. In the religion of Islám, similarly, not every

> ordinance was explicitly revealed; nay not a tenth part of a tenth part was included in the Text; although all matters of major importance were specifically referred to, there were undoubtedly thousands of laws which were unspecified. These were devised by the divines of a later age according to the laws of Islamic jurisprudence, and individual divines made conflicting deductions from the original revealed ordinances. All these were enforced. Today this process of deduction is the right of the body of the House of Justice, and the deductions and conclusions of individual learned men have no authority, unless they are endorsed by the House of Justice. The difference is precisely this, that from the conclusions and endorsements of the body of the House of Justice whose members are elected by and known to the worldwide Bahá'í community, no differences will arise; whereas the conclusions of individual divines and scholars would definitely lead to differences, and result in schism, division, and dispersion. The oneness of the Word would be destroyed, the unity of the Faith would disappear, and the edifice of the Faith of God would be shaken.

Although the Universal House of Justice is explicitly authorized to change or repeal its own legislation as conditions change, thus providing Bahá'í law with an essential element of flexibility, it cannot abrogate or change any of the laws which are explicitly laid down in the sacred Text.

The society for which certain of the laws of the Aqdas are designed will come only gradually into being, and Bahá'u'lláh has provided for the progressive application of Bahá'í law:

> Indeed, the laws of God are like unto the ocean and the children of men as fish, did they but know it. However, in observing them one must exercise tact and wisdom... Since most people are feeble and far-removed from the purpose of God, therefore one must observe tact and prudence under all conditions, so that nothing might happen that could cause disturbance and dissension or raise clamour among the heedless. Verily, His bounty hath surpassed the whole universe and His bestowals encompassed all that dwell on earth. One must guide mankind to the ocean of true understanding in a spirit of love and tolerance. The Kitáb-i-Aqdas itself beareth eloquent testimony to the loving providence of God.

The principle governing this progressive application was enunciated in a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to a National Spiritual Assembly in 1935:

> The laws revealed by Bahá'u'lláh in the Aqdas are, whenever practicable and not in direct conflict with the Civil Law of the land, absolutely binding on every believer or Bahá'í institution whether in the East or in the West. Certain ... laws should be regarded by all believers as universally and vitally applicable at the present time. Others have been formulated in anticipation of a state of society destined to emerge from the chaotic conditions that prevail today... What has not been formulated in the Aqdas, in addition to matters of detail and of secondary importance arising out of the application of the laws already formulated by Bahá'u'lláh, will have to be enacted by the Universal House of Justice. This body can supplement but never invalidate or modify in the least degree what has already been formulated by Bahá'u'lláh. Nor has the Guardian any right whatsoever to lessen the binding effect much less to [pg

7]abrogate the provisions of so fundamental and sacred a Book.

The number of laws binding on Bahá'ís is not increased by the publication of this translation. When it is deemed timely, the Bahá'í community will be advised which additional laws are binding upon believers, and any guidance or supplementary legislation necessary for their application will be provided.

In general, the laws of the Kitáb-i-Aqdas are stated succinctly. An example of this conciseness can be seen in the fact that many are expressed only as they apply to a man, but it is apparent from the Guardian's writings that, where Bahá'u'lláh has given a law as between a man and a woman, it applies mutatis mutandis between a woman and a man unless the context makes this impossible. For example, the text of the Kitáb-i-Aqdas forbids a man to marry his father's wife (i.e. his stepmother), and the Guardian has indicated that likewise a woman is forbidden to marry her stepfather. This understanding of the implications of the Law has far-reaching effects in light of the fundamental Bahá'í principle of the equality of the sexes, and should be borne in mind when the sacred Text is studied. That men and women differ from one another in certain characteristics and functions is an inescapable fact of nature and makes possible their complementary roles in certain areas of the life of society; but it is significant that 'Abdu'l-Bahá has stated that in this Dispensation "Equality of men and women, except in some negligible instances, has been fully and categorically announced."

Mention has already been made of the intimate relationship between the Kitáb-i-Aqdas and the Holy Books of previous Dispensations. Especially close is the relationship to the Bayán, the Book of Laws revealed by the Báb. It is elucidated in the following excerpts from letters written on behalf of the Guardian:

> Shoghi Effendi feels that the unity of the Bahá'í Revelation as one complete whole embracing the Faith of the Báb should be emphasized... The Faith of the Báb should not be divorced from that of Bahá'u'lláh. Though the teachings of the Bayán have been abrogated and superseded by the laws of the Aqdas, yet due to the fact that the Báb considered Himself as the Forerunner of Bahá'u'lláh, we would regard His Dispensation together with that of Bahá'u'lláh as forming one entity, the former being introductory to the advent of the latter.
>
> The Báb states that His laws are provisional and depend upon the acceptance of the future Manifestation. This is why in the Book of Aqdas Bahá'u'lláh sanctions some of the laws found in the Bayán, modifies others and sets aside many.

Just as the Bayán had been revealed by the Báb at about the mid-point of His Ministry, Bahá'u'lláh revealed the Kitáb-i-Aqdas around 1873, some twenty years after He had received, in the Síyáh-Ch̲ál of Ṭihrán, the intimation of His Revelation. In one of His Tablets He indicates that even after its revelation the Aqdas was withheld by Him for some time before it was sent to the friends in Iran. Thereafter, as Shoghi Effendi has related:

> The formulation by Bahá'u'lláh, in His Kitáb-i-Aqdas, of the fundamental laws of His Dispensation was followed, as His Mission drew to a close, by the enunciation of certain precepts and principles which lie at the very core of His Faith, by the reaffirmation of truths He had previously proclaimed, by the elaboration and elucidation of some of the laws He had already laid down, by the revelation of further prophecies and warnings,

> and by the establishment of subsidiary ordinances designed to supplement the provisions [pg 9]of His Most Holy Book. These were recorded in unnumbered Tablets, which He continued to reveal until the last days of His earthly life...

Among such works is the Questions and Answers, a compilation made by Zaynu'l-Muqarrabín, the most eminent of the transcribers of Bahá'u'lláh's Writings. Consisting of answers revealed by Bahá'u'lláh to questions put to Him by various believers, it constitutes an invaluable appendix to the Kitáb-i-Aqdas. In 1978 the most noteworthy of the other Tablets of this nature were published in English as a compilation entitled Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh revealed after the Kitáb-i-Aqdas.

Some years after the revelation of the Kitáb-i-Aqdas, Bahá'u'lláh had manuscript copies sent to Bahá'ís in Iran, and in the year 1308 A.H. (1890-91 A.D.), towards the end of His life, He arranged for the publication of the original Arabic text of the Book in Bombay.

A word should be said about the style of language in which the Kitáb-i-Aqdas has been rendered into English. Bahá'u'lláh enjoyed a superb mastery of Arabic, and preferred to use it in those Tablets and other Writings where its precision of meaning was particularly appropriate to the exposition of basic principle. Beyond the choice of language itself, however, the style employed is of an exalted and emotive character, immensely compelling, particularly to those familiar with the great literary tradition out of which it arose. In taking up his task of translation, Shoghi Effendi faced the challenge of finding an English style which would not only faithfully convey the exactness of the text's meaning, but would also evoke in the reader the spirit of meditative reverence which is a distinguishing feature of response to the original. The form of expression he selected, reminiscent of the style used by the seventeenth-century translators of

the Bible, captures the elevated mode of [pg 10]Bahá'u'lláh's Arabic, while remaining accessible to the contemporary reader. His translations, moreover, are illumined by his uniquely inspired understanding of the purport and implications of the originals.

Although both Arabic and English are languages with rich vocabularies and varied modes of expression, their forms differ widely from one another. The Arabic of the Kitáb-i-Aqdas is marked by intense concentration and terseness of expression. It is a characteristic of this style that if a connotation is obvious it should not be explicitly stated. This presents a problem for a reader whose cultural, religious and literary background is entirely different from that of Arabic. A literal translation of a passage which is clear in the Arabic could be obscure in English. It therefore becomes necessary to include in the English translation of such passages that element of the Arabic sentence which is obviously implicit in the original. At the same time, it is vital to avoid extrapolating this process to the point where it would add unjustifiably to the original or limit its meaning. Striking the right balance between beauty and clarity of expression on the one hand, and literalness on the other, is one of the major issues with which the translators have had to grapple and which has caused repeated reconsideration of the rendering of certain passages. Another major issue is the legal implication of certain Arabic terms which have a range of meanings different from those of similar terms in English.

Sacred Scripture clearly requires especial care and faithfulness in translation. This is supremely important in the case of a Book of Laws, where it is vital that the reader not be misled or drawn into fruitless disputation. As had been foreseen, the translation of the Most Holy Book has been a work of the utmost difficulty, requiring consultation with experts in many lands. Since some one third of the text had already been translated by Shoghi Effendi, it was necessary to strive for three qualities in the

translation [pg 11]of the remaining passages: accuracy of meaning, beauty of English, and conformity of style with that used by Shoghi Effendi.

We are now satisfied that the translation has reached a point where it represents an acceptable rendering of the original. Nevertheless, it will undoubtedly give rise to questions and suggestions which may shed further light on its content. We are profoundly grateful for the assiduous and meticulous labours of the members of the Committees whom we commissioned to prepare and review this translation of the Aqdas and to compose the annotations. We are confident that this first authorized English edition of the Kitáb-i-Aqdas will enable its readers to obtain at least an inkling of the splendour of the Mother Book of the Bahá'í Dispensation.

Our world has entered the dark heart of an age of fundamental change beyond anything in all of its tumultuous history. Its peoples, of whatever race, nation, or religion, are being challenged to subordinate all lesser loyalties and limiting identities to their oneness as citizens of a single planetary homeland. In Bahá'u'lláh's words: "The well-being of mankind, its peace and security, are unattainable unless and until its unity is firmly established." May the publication of this translation of the Kitáb-i-Aqdas lend a fresh impulse to the realization of this universal vision, opening vistas of a worldwide regeneration.

THE UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE

A Description of the Kitáb-i-Aqdas by Shoghi Effendi

Taken from *God Passes By*, His History of the First Bahá'í Century

Unique and stupendous as was this Proclamation, it proved to be but a prelude to a still mightier revelation of the creative power of its Author, and to what may well rank as the most signal act of His ministry—the promulgation of the Kitáb-i-Aqdas. Alluded to in the Kitáb-i-Iqán, the principal repository of that Law which the Prophet Isaiah had anticipated, and which the writer of the Apocalypse had described as the "new heaven" and the "new earth", as "the Tabernacle of God", as the "Holy City", as the "Bride", the "New Jerusalem coming down from God", this "Most Holy Book", whose provisions must remain inviolate for no less than a thousand years, and whose system will embrace the entire planet, may well be regarded as the brightest emanation of the mind of Bahá'u'lláh, as the Mother Book of His Dispensation, and the Charter of His New World Order.

Revealed soon after Bahá'u'lláh had been transferred to the house of Údí Kẖammár (circa 1873), at a time when He was still encompassed by the tribulations that had afflicted Him, through the acts committed by His enemies and the professed adherents of His Faith, this Book, this treasury enshrining the priceless gems of His Revelation, stands out, by virtue of the principles it inculcates, the administrative [pg 13]institutions it ordains and the function with which it invests the appointed Successor of its Author, unique and incomparable among the world's sacred Scriptures. For, unlike the Old Testament and the

Holy Books which preceded it, in which the actual precepts uttered by the Prophet Himself are non-existent; unlike the Gospels, in which the few sayings attributed to Jesus Christ afford no clear guidance regarding the future administration of the affairs of His Faith; unlike even the Qur'án which, though explicit in the laws and ordinances formulated by the Apostle of God, is silent on the all-important subject of the succession, the Kitáb-i-Aqdas, revealed from first to last by the Author of the Dispensation Himself, not only preserves for posterity the basic laws and ordinances on which the fabric of His future World Order must rest, but ordains, in addition to the function of interpretation which it confers upon His Successor, the necessary institutions through which the integrity and unity of His Faith can alone be safeguarded.

In this Charter of the future world civilization its Author —at once the Judge, the Lawgiver, the Unifier and Redeemer of mankind—announces to the kings of the earth the promulgation of the "Most Great Law"; pronounces them to be His vassals; proclaims Himself the "King of Kings"; disclaims any intention of laying hands on their kingdoms; reserves for Himself the right to "seize and possess the hearts of men"; warns the world's ecclesiastical leaders not to weigh the "Book of God" with such standards as are current amongst them; and affirms that the Book itself is the "Unerring Balance" established amongst men. In it He formally ordains the institution of the "House of Justice", defines its functions, fixes its revenues, and designates its members as the "Men of Justice", the "Deputies of God", the "Trustees of the All-Merciful"; alludes to the future Centre of His Covenant, and invests Him with the right of interpreting His holy Writ; anticipates by implication the [pg 14]institution of Guardianship; bears witness to the revolutionizing effect of His World Order; enunciates the doctrine of the "Most Great Infallibility" of the Manifestation of God; asserts this infallibility to be the inherent and exclusive right of the Prophet; and rules out the possibility of the appearance of another Manifestation ere the lapse of at

least one thousand years.

In this Book He, moreover, prescribes the obligatory prayers; designates the time and period of fasting; prohibits congregational prayer except for the dead; fixes the Qiblih; institutes the Ḥuqúqu'lláh (Right of God); formulates the law of inheritance; ordains the institution of the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár; establishes the Nineteen Day Feast, the Bahá'í festivals and the Intercalary Days; abolishes the institution of priesthood; prohibits slavery, asceticism, mendicancy, monasticism, penance, the use of pulpits and the kissing of hands; prescribes monogamy; condemns cruelty to animals, idleness and sloth, backbiting and calumny; censures divorce; interdicts gambling, the use of opium, wine and other intoxicating drinks; specifies the punishments for murder, arson, adultery and theft; stresses the importance of marriage and lays down its essential conditions; imposes the obligation of engaging in some trade or profession, exalting such occupation to the rank of worship; emphasizes the necessity of providing the means for the education of children; and lays upon every person the duty of writing a testament and of strict obedience to one's government.

Apart from these provisions Bahá'u'lláh exhorts His followers to consort, with amity and concord and without discrimination, with the adherents of all religions; warns them to guard against fanaticism, sedition, pride, dispute and contention; inculcates upon them immaculate cleanliness, strict truthfulness, spotless chastity, trustworthiness, hospitality, fidelity, courtesy, forbearance, justice and fairness; counsels them to be "even as the fingers of one hand and the limbs of one body"; calls upon them to arise and serve [pg 15]His Cause; and assures them of His undoubted aid. He, furthermore, dwells upon the instability of human affairs; declares that true liberty consists in man's submission to His commandments; cautions them not to be indulgent in carrying out His statutes; prescribes the twin inseparable

duties of recognizing the "Dayspring of God's Revelation" and of observing all the ordinances revealed by Him, neither of which, He affirms, is acceptable without the other.

The significant summons issued to the Presidents of the Republics of the American continent to seize their opportunity in the Day of God and to champion the cause of justice; the injunction to the members of parliaments throughout the world, urging the adoption of a universal script and language; His warnings to William I, the conqueror of Napoleon III; the reproof He administers to Francis Joseph, the Emperor of Austria; His reference to "the lamentations of Berlin" in His apostrophe to "the banks of the Rhine"; His condemnation of "the throne of tyranny" established in Constantinople, and His prediction of the extinction of its "outward splendour" and of the tribulations destined to overtake its inhabitants; the words of cheer and comfort He addresses to His native city, assuring her that God had chosen her to be "the source of the joy of all mankind"; His prophecy that "the voice of the heroes of Khurásán" will be raised in glorification of their Lord; His assertion that men "endued with mighty valour" will be raised up in Kirmán who will make mention of Him; and finally, His magnanimous assurance to a perfidious brother who had afflicted Him with such anguish, that an "ever-forgiving, all-bounteous" God would forgive him his iniquities were he only to repent—all these further enrich the contents of a Book designated by its Author as "the source of true felicity", as the "Unerring Balance", as the "Straight Path" and as the "quickener of mankind".

The laws and ordinances that constitute the major theme of this Book, Bahá'u'lláh, moreover, has specifically [pg 16]characterized as "the breath of life unto all created things", as "the mightiest stronghold", as the "fruits" of His "Tree", as "the highest means for the maintenance of order in the world and the security of its peoples", as "the lamps of His wisdom and loving-providence", as "the sweet-

smelling savour of His garment", and the "keys" of His "mercy" to His creatures. "This Book", He Himself testifies, "is a heaven which We have adorned with the stars of Our commandments and prohibitions." "Blessed the man", He, moreover, has stated, "who will read it, and ponder the verses sent down in it by God, the Lord of Power, the Almighty. Say, O men! Take hold of it with the hand of resignation... By My life! It hath been sent down in a manner that amazeth the minds of men. Verily, it is My weightiest testimony unto all people, and the proof of the All-Merciful unto all who are in heaven and all who are on earth." And again: "Blessed the palate that savoureth its sweetness, and the perceiving eye that recognizeth that which is treasured therein, and the understanding heart that comprehendeth its allusions and mysteries. By God! Such is the majesty of what hath been revealed therein, and so tremendous the revelation of its veiled allusions that the loins of utterance shake when attempting their description." And finally: "In such a manner hath the Kitáb-i-Aqdas been revealed that it attracteth and embraceth all the divinely appointed Dispensations. Blessed those who peruse it! Blessed those who apprehend it! Blessed those who meditate upon it! Blessed those who ponder its meaning! So vast is its range that it hath encompassed all men ere their recognition of it. Erelong will its sovereign power, its pervasive influence and the greatness of its might be manifested on earth."

[pg 19]

The Kitáb-i-Aqdas

In The Name Of Him Who Is The Supreme Ruler Over All That Hath Been And All That Is To Be

1 The first duty prescribed by God for His servants is the recognition of Him Who is the Dayspring of His Revelation and the Fountain of His laws, Who representeth the Godhead in both the Kingdom of His Cause and the world of creation. Whoso achieveth this duty hath attained unto all good; and whoso is deprived thereof hath gone astray, though he be the author of every righteous deed. It behoveth every one who reacheth this most sublime station, this summit of transcendent glory, to observe every ordinance of Him Who is the Desire of the world. These twin duties are inseparable. Neither is acceptable without the other. Thus hath it been

decreed by Him Who is the Source of Divine inspiration.

2 They whom God hath endued with insight will readily recognize that the precepts laid down by God constitute the highest means for the maintenance of order in the world and the security of its peoples. He that turneth away from them is accounted among the abject and foolish. We, verily, have commanded you to refuse the dictates of your evil passions and corrupt [pg 20]desires, and not to transgress the bounds which the Pen of the Most High hath fixed, for these are the breath of life unto all created things. The seas of Divine wisdom and Divine utterance have risen under the breath of the breeze of the All-Merciful. Hasten to drink your fill, O men of understanding! They that have violated the Covenant of God by breaking His commandments, and have turned back on their heels, these have erred grievously in the sight of God, the All-Possessing, the Most High.

3 O ye peoples of the world! Know assuredly that My commandments are the lamps of My loving providence among My servants, and the keys of My mercy for My creatures. Thus hath it been sent down from the heaven of the Will of your Lord, the Lord of Revelation. Were any man to taste the sweetness of the words which the lips of the All-Merciful have willed to utter, he would, though the treasures of the earth be in his possession, renounce them one and all, that he might vindicate the truth of even one of His commandments, shining above the Dayspring of His bountiful care and loving-kindness.

4 Say: From My laws the sweet-smelling savour of My garment can be smelled, and by their aid the standards of Victory will be planted upon the highest peaks. The Tongue of My power hath, from the heaven of My omnipotent glory, addressed to My creation these words: "Observe My commandments, for the love of My beauty." Happy is the lover that hath inhaled the divine fragrance of his Best-Beloved from these words, laden with the perfume of a grace which no tongue can [pg 21]describe.

By My life! He who hath drunk the choice wine of fairness from the hands of My bountiful favour will circle around My commandments that shine above the Dayspring of My creation.

5 Think not that We have revealed unto you a mere code of laws. Nay, rather, We have unsealed the choice Wine with the fingers of might and power. To this beareth witness that which the Pen of Revelation hath revealed. Meditate upon this, O men of insight!

6 We have enjoined obligatory prayer upon you, with nine rak'áhs, to be offered at noon and in the morning and the evening unto God, the Revealer of Verses. We have relieved you of a greater number, as a command in the Book of God. He, verily, is the Ordainer, the Omnipotent, the Unrestrained. When ye desire to perform this prayer, turn ye towards the Court of My Most Holy Presence, this Hallowed Spot that God hath made the Centre round which circle the Concourse on High, and which He hath decreed to be the Point of Adoration for the denizens of the Cities of Eternity, and the Source of Command unto all that are in heaven and on earth; and when the Sun of Truth and Utterance shall set, turn your faces towards the Spot that We have ordained for you. He, verily, is Almighty and Omniscient.

7 Everything that is hath come to be through His irresistible decree. Whenever My laws appear like the sun in the heaven of Mine utterance, they must be faithfully obeyed by all, though My decree be such as to cause the heaven of every religion to be cleft asunder. He doeth what He pleaseth. He chooseth, and none [pg 22]may question His choice. Whatsoever He, the Well-Beloved, ordaineth, the same is, verily, beloved. To this He Who is the Lord of all creation beareth Me witness. Whoso hath inhaled the sweet fragrance of the All-Merciful, and recognized the Source of this utterance, will welcome with his own eyes the shafts of the enemy, that he may establish the truth of the laws of God amongst men. Well

is it with him that hath turned thereunto, and apprehended the meaning of His decisive decree.

8 We have set forth the details of obligatory prayer in another Tablet. Blessed is he who observeth that whereunto he hath been bidden by Him Who ruleth over all mankind. In the Prayer for the Dead six specific passages have been sent down by God, the Revealer of Verses. Let one who is able to read recite that which hath been revealed to precede these passages; and as for him who is unable, God hath relieved him of this requirement. He, of a truth, is the Mighty, the Pardoner.

9 Hair doth not invalidate your prayer, nor aught from which the spirit hath departed, such as bones and the like. Ye are free to wear the fur of the sable as ye would that of the beaver, the squirrel, and other animals; the prohibition of its use hath stemmed, not from the Qur'án, but from the misconceptions of the divines. He, verily, is the All-Glorious, the All-Knowing.

10 We have commanded you to pray and fast from the beginning of maturity; this is ordained by God, your Lord and the Lord of your forefathers. He hath [pg 23]exempted from this those who are weak from illness or age, as a bounty from His Presence, and He is the Forgiving, the Generous. God hath granted you leave to prostrate yourselves on any surface that is clean, for We have removed in this regard the limitation that had been laid down in the Book; God, indeed, hath knowledge of that whereof ye know naught. Let him that findeth no water for ablution repeat five times the words "In the Name of God, the Most Pure, the Most Pure", and then proceed to his devotions. Such is the command of the Lord of all worlds. In regions where the days and nights grow long, let times of prayer be gauged by clocks and other instruments that mark the passage of the hours. He, verily, is the Expounder, the Wise.

11 We have absolved you from the requirement of performing the Prayer of the Signs. On the appearance of

fearful natural events call ye to mind the might and majesty of your Lord, He Who heareth and seeth all, and say "Dominion is God's, the Lord of the seen and the unseen, the Lord of creation".

12 It hath been ordained that obligatory prayer is to be performed by each of you individually. Save in the Prayer for the Dead, the practice of congregational prayer hath been annulled. He, of a truth, is the Ordainer, the All-Wise.

13 God hath exempted women who are in their courses from obligatory prayer and fasting. Let them, instead, after performance of their ablutions, give praise unto God, repeating ninety-five times between the noon of one day and the next "Glorified be God, the [pg 24]Lord of Splendour and Beauty". Thus hath it been decreed in the Book, if ye be of them that comprehend.

14 When travelling, if ye should stop and rest in some safe spot, perform ye—men and women alike—a single prostration in place of each unsaid Obligatory Prayer, and while prostrating say "Glorified be God, the Lord of Might and Majesty, of Grace and Bounty". Whoso is unable to do this, let him say only "Glorified be God"; this shall assuredly suffice him. He is, of a truth, the all-sufficing, the ever-abiding, the forgiving, compassionate God. Upon completing your prostrations, seat yourselves cross-legged —men and women alike—and eighteen times repeat "Glorified be God, the Lord of the kingdoms of earth and heaven". Thus doth the Lord make plain the ways of truth and guidance, ways that lead to one way, which is this Straight Path. Render thanks unto God for this most gracious favour; offer praise unto Him for this bounty that hath encompassed the heavens and the earth; extol Him for this mercy that hath pervaded all creation.

15 Say: God hath made My hidden love the key to the Treasure; would that ye might perceive it! But for the key, the Treasure would to all eternity have remained concealed; would that ye might believe it! Say: This is the

Source of Revelation, the Dawning-place of Splendour, Whose brightness hath illumined the horizons of the world. Would that ye might understand! This is, verily, that fixed Decree through which every irrevocable decree hath been established.

16 O Pen of the Most High! Say: O people of the world! We have enjoined upon you fasting during a [pg 25]brief period, and at its close have designated for you Naw-Rúz as a feast. Thus hath the Day-Star of Utterance shone forth above the horizon of the Book as decreed by Him Who is the Lord of the beginning and the end. Let the days in excess of the months be placed before the month of fasting. We have ordained that these, amid all nights and days, shall be the manifestations of the letter Há, and thus they have not been bounded by the limits of the year and its months. It behoveth the people of Bahá, throughout these days, to provide good cheer for themselves, their kindred and, beyond them, the poor and needy, and with joy and exultation to hail and glorify their Lord, to sing His praise and magnify His Name; and when they end—these days of giving that precede the season of restraint—let them enter upon the Fast. Thus hath it been ordained by Him Who is the Lord of all mankind. The traveller, the ailing, those who are with child or giving suck, are not bound by the Fast; they have been exempted by God as a token of His grace. He, verily, is the Almighty, the Most Generous.

17 These are the ordinances of God that have been set down in the Books and Tablets by His Most Exalted Pen. Hold ye fast unto His statutes and commandments, and be not of those who, following their idle fancies and vain imaginings, have clung to the standards fixed by their own selves, and cast behind their backs the standards laid down by God. Abstain from food and drink from sunrise to sundown, and beware lest desire deprive you of this grace that is appointed in the Book.

[pg 26]

18 It hath been ordained that every believer in God, the Lord of Judgement, shall, each day, having washed his hands and then his face, seat himself and, turning unto God, repeat "Alláh-u-Abhá" ninety-five times. Such was the decree of the Maker of the Heavens when, with majesty and power, He established Himself upon the thrones of His Names. Perform ye, likewise, ablutions for the Obligatory Prayer; this is the command of God, the Incomparable, the Unrestrained.

19 Ye have been forbidden to commit murder or adultery, or to engage in backbiting or calumny; shun ye, then, what hath been prohibited in the holy Books and Tablets.

20 We have divided inheritance into seven categories: to the children, We have allotted nine parts comprising five hundred and forty shares; to the wife, eight parts comprising four hundred and eighty shares; to the father, seven parts comprising four hundred and twenty shares; to the mother, six parts comprising three hundred and sixty shares; to the brothers, five parts or three hundred shares; to the sisters, four parts or two hundred and forty shares; and to the teachers, three parts or one hundred and eighty shares. Such was the ordinance of My Forerunner, He Who extolleth My Name in the night season and at the break of day. When We heard the clamour of the children as yet unborn, We doubled their share and decreased those of the rest. He, of a truth, hath power to ordain whatsoever He desireth, and He doeth as He pleaseth by virtue of His sovereign might.

21 Should the deceased leave no offspring, their share [pg 27]shall revert to the House of Justice, to be expended by the Trustees of the All-Merciful on the orphaned and widowed, and on whatsoever will bring benefit to the generality of the people, that all may give thanks unto their Lord, the All-Gracious, the Pardoner.

22 Should the deceased leave offspring, but none of the other categories of heirs that have been specified in the Book, they shall receive two thirds of the inheritance and

the remaining third shall revert to the House of Justice. Such is the command which hath been given, in majesty and glory, by Him Who is the All-Possessing, the Most High.

23 If the deceased should leave none of the specified heirs, but have among his relatives nephews and nieces, whether on his brother's or his sister's side, two thirds of the inheritance shall pass to them; or, lacking these, to his uncles and aunts on both his father's and his mother's side, and after them to their sons and daughters. The remaining third of the inheritance shall, in any case, revert to the Seat of Justice. Thus hath it been laid down in the Book by Him Who ruleth over all men.

24 Should the deceased be survived by none of those whose names have been recorded by the Pen of the Most High, his estate shall, in its entirety, revert to the aforementioned Seat that it may be expended on that which is prescribed by God. He, verily, is the Ordainer, the Omnipotent.

25 We have assigned the residence and personal clothing of the deceased to the male, not female, [pg 28]offspring, nor to the other heirs. He, verily, is the Munificent, the All-Bountiful.

26 Should the son of the deceased have passed away in the days of his father and have left children, they will inherit their father's share, as prescribed in the Book of God. Divide ye their share amongst them with perfect justice. Thus have the billows of the Ocean of Utterance surged, casting forth the pearls of the laws decreed by the Lord of all mankind.

27 If the deceased should leave children who are under age, their share of the inheritance must be entrusted to a reliable individual, or to a company, that it may be invested on their behalf in trade and business until they come of age. The trustee should be assigned a due share of the profit that hath accrued to it from being thus

employed.

28 Division of the estate should take place only after the Ḥuqúqu'lláh hath been paid, any debts have been settled, the expenses of the funeral and burial defrayed, and such provision made that the deceased may be carried to his resting-place with dignity and honour. Thus hath it been ordained by Him Who is Lord of the beginning and the end.

29 Say: This is that hidden knowledge which shall never change, since its beginning is with nine, the symbol that betokeneth the concealed and manifest, the inviolable and unapproachably exalted Name. As for what We have appropriated to the children, this is a bounty conferred on them by God, that they may render thanks unto their Lord, the Compassionate, the [pg 29]Merciful. These, verily, are the Laws of God; transgress them not at the prompting of your base and selfish desires. Observe ye the injunctions laid upon you by Him Who is the Dawning-place of Utterance. The sincere among His servants will regard the precepts set forth by God as the Water of Life to the followers of every faith, and the Lamp of wisdom and loving providence to all the denizens of earth and heaven.

30 The Lord hath ordained that in every city a House of Justice be established wherein shall gather counsellors to the number of Bahá, and should it exceed this number it doth not matter. They should consider themselves as entering the Court of the presence of God, the Exalted, the Most High, and as beholding Him Who is the Unseen. It behoveth them to be the trusted ones of the Merciful among men and to regard themselves as the guardians appointed of God for all that dwell on earth. It is incumbent upon them to take counsel together and to have regard for the interests of the servants of God, for His sake, even as they regard their own interests, and to choose that which is meet and seemly. Thus hath the Lord your God commanded you. Beware lest ye put away that

which is clearly revealed in His Tablet. Fear God, O ye that perceive.

31 O people of the world! Build ye houses of worship throughout the lands in the name of Him Who is the Lord of all religions. Make them as perfect as is possible in the world of being, and adorn them with that which befitteth them, not with images and effigies. Then, with radiance and joy, celebrate therein the praise of your Lord, the Most Compassionate. Verily, by His [pg 30]remembrance the eye is cheered and the heart is filled with light.

32 The Lord hath ordained that those of you who are able shall make pilgrimage to the sacred House, and from this He hath exempted women as a mercy on His part. He, of a truth, is the All-Bountiful, the Most Generous.

33 O people of Bahá! It is incumbent upon each one of you to engage in some occupation—such as a craft, a trade or the like. We have exalted your engagement in such work to the rank of worship of the one true God. Reflect, O people, on the grace and blessings of your Lord, and yield Him thanks at eventide and dawn. Waste not your hours in idleness and sloth, but occupy yourselves with what will profit you and others. Thus hath it been decreed in this Tablet from whose horizon hath shone the day-star of wisdom and utterance. The most despised of men in the sight of God are they who sit and beg. Hold ye fast unto the cord of means and place your trust in God, the Provider of all means.

34 The kissing of hands hath been forbidden in the Book. This practice is prohibited by God, the Lord of glory and command. To none is it permitted to seek absolution from another soul; let repentance be between yourselves and God. He, verily, is the Pardoner, the Bounteous, the Gracious, the One Who absolveth the repentant.

35 O ye servants of the Merciful One! Arise to serve the Cause of God, in such wise that the cares and sorrows caused by them that have disbelieved in the Dayspring of

the Signs of God may not afflict you. At [pg 31]the time when the Promise was fulfilled and the Promised One made manifest, differences have appeared amongst the kindreds of the earth and each people hath followed its own fancy and idle imaginings.

36 Amongst the people is he who seateth himself amid the sandals by the door whilst coveting in his heart the seat of honour. Say: What manner of man art thou, O vain and heedless one, who wouldst appear as other than thou art? And among the people is he who layeth claim to inner knowledge, and still deeper knowledge concealed within this knowledge. Say: Thou speakest false! By God! What thou dost possess is naught but husks which We have left to thee as bones are left to dogs. By the righteousness of the one true God! Were anyone to wash the feet of all mankind, and were he to worship God in the forests, valleys, and mountains, upon high hills and lofty peaks, to leave no rock or tree, no clod of earth, but was a witness to his worship—yet, should the fragrance of My good pleasure not be inhaled from him, his works would never be acceptable unto God. Thus hath it been decreed by Him Who is the Lord of all. How many a man hath secluded himself in the climes of India, denied himself the things that God hath decreed as lawful, imposed upon himself austerities and mortifications, and hath not been remembered by God, the Revealer of Verses. Make not your deeds as snares wherewith to entrap the object of your aspiration, and deprive not yourselves of this Ultimate Objective for which have ever yearned all such as have drawn nigh [pg 32]unto God. Say: The very life of all deeds is My good pleasure, and all things depend upon Mine acceptance. Read ye the Tablets that ye may know what hath been purposed in the Books of God, the All-Glorious, the Ever-Bounteous. He who attaineth to My love hath title to a throne of gold, to sit thereon in honour over all the world; he who is deprived thereof, though he sit upon the dust, that dust would seek refuge with God, the Lord of all Religions.

37 Whoso layeth claim to a Revelation direct from God, ere the expiration of a full thousand years, such a man is assuredly a lying impostor. We pray God that He may graciously assist him to retract and repudiate such claim. Should he repent, God will, no doubt, forgive him. If, however, he persisteth in his error, God will, assuredly, send down one who will deal mercilessly with him. Terrible, indeed, is God in punishing! Whosoever interpreteth this verse otherwise than its obvious meaning is deprived of the Spirit of God and of His mercy which encompasseth all created things. Fear God, and follow not your idle fancies. Nay, rather, follow the bidding of your Lord, the Almighty, the All-Wise. Erelong shall clamorous voices be raised in most lands. Shun them, O My people, and follow not the iniquitous and evil-hearted. This is that of which We gave you forewarning when We were dwelling in ‘Iráq, then later while in the Land of Mystery, and now from this Resplendent Spot.

38 Be not dismayed, O peoples of the world, when the day-star of My beauty is set, and the heaven of My tabernacle is concealed from your eyes. Arise to further [pg 33]My Cause, and to exalt My Word amongst men. We are with you at all times, and shall strengthen you through the power of truth. We are truly almighty. Whoso hath recognized Me will arise and serve Me with such determination that the powers of earth and heaven shall be unable to defeat his purpose.

39 The peoples of the world are fast asleep. Were they to wake from their slumber, they would hasten with eagerness unto God, the All-Knowing, the All-Wise. They would cast away everything they possess, be it all the treasures of the earth, that their Lord may remember them to the extent of addressing to them but one word. Such is the instruction given you by Him Who holdeth the knowledge of things hidden, in a Tablet which the eye of creation hath not seen, and which is revealed to none except His own Self, the omnipotent Protector of all worlds. So bewildered are they in the drunkenness of

their evil desires, that they are powerless to recognize the Lord of all being, Whose voice calleth aloud from every direction: "There is none other God but Me, the Mighty, the All-Wise."

40 Say: Rejoice not in the things ye possess; tonight they are yours, tomorrow others will possess them. Thus warneth you He Who is the All-Knowing, the All-Informed. Say: Can ye claim that what ye own is lasting or secure? Nay! By Myself, the All-Merciful, ye cannot, if ye be of them who judge fairly. The days of your life flee away as a breath of wind, and all your pomp and glory shall be folded up as were the pomp and glory of those gone before you. Reflect, O people! What hath become of your bygone days, your lost [pg 34]centuries? Happy the days that have been consecrated to the remembrance of God, and blessed the hours which have been spent in praise of Him Who is the All-Wise. By My life! Neither the pomp of the mighty, nor the wealth of the rich, nor even the ascendancy of the ungodly will endure. All will perish, at a word from Him. He, verily, is the All-Powerful, the All-Compelling, the Almighty. What advantage is there in the earthly things which men possess? That which shall profit them, they have utterly neglected. Erelong, they will awake from their slumber, and find themselves unable to obtain that which hath escaped them in the days of their Lord, the Almighty, the All-Praised. Did they but know it, they would renounce their all, that their names may be mentioned before His throne. They, verily, are accounted among the dead.

41 Amongst the people is he whose learning hath made him proud, and who hath been debarred thereby from recognizing My Name, the Self-Subsisting; who, when he heareth the tread of sandals following behind him, waxeth greater in his own esteem than Nimrod. Say: O rejected one! Where now is his abode? By God, it is the nethermost fire. Say: O concourse of divines! Hear ye not the shrill voice of My Most Exalted Pen? See ye not this Sun that shineth in refulgent splendour above the All-

Glorious Horizon? For how long will ye worship the idols of your evil passions? Forsake your vain imaginings, and turn yourselves unto God, your Everlasting Lord.

42 Endowments dedicated to charity revert to God, the Revealer of Signs. None hath the right to dispose of [pg 35]them without leave from Him Who is the Dawning-place of Revelation. After Him, this authority shall pass to the Aghṣán, and after them to the House of Justice—should it be established in the world by then—that they may use these endowments for the benefit of the Places which have been exalted in this Cause, and for whatsoever hath been enjoined upon them by Him Who is the God of might and power. Otherwise, the endowments shall revert to the people of Bahá who speak not except by His leave and judge not save in accordance with what God hath decreed in this Tablet—lo, they are the champions of victory betwixt heaven and earth—that they may use them in the manner that hath been laid down in the Book by God, the Mighty, the Bountiful.

43 Lament not in your hours of trial, neither rejoice therein; seek ye the Middle Way which is the remembrance of Me in your afflictions and reflection over that which may befall you in future. Thus informeth you He Who is the Omniscient, He Who is aware.

44 Shave not your heads; God hath adorned them with hair, and in this there are signs from the Lord of creation to those who reflect upon the requirements of nature. He, verily, is the God of strength and wisdom. Notwithstanding, it is not seemly to let the hair pass beyond the limit of the ears. Thus hath it been decreed by Him Who is the Lord of all worlds.

45 Exile and imprisonment are decreed for the thief, and, on the third offence, place ye a mark upon his [pg 36]brow so that, thus identified, he may not be accepted in the cities of God and His countries. Beware lest, through compassion, ye neglect to carry out the statutes of the religion of God; do that which hath been bidden

you by Him Who is compassionate and merciful. We school you with the rod of wisdom and laws, like unto the father who educateth his son, and this for naught but the protection of your own selves and the elevation of your stations. By My life, were ye to discover what We have desired for you in revealing Our holy laws, ye would offer up your very souls for this sacred, this mighty, and most exalted Faith.

46 Whoso wisheth to make use of vessels of silver and gold is at liberty to do so. Take heed lest, when partaking of food, ye plunge your hands into the contents of bowls and platters. Adopt ye such usages as are most in keeping with refinement. He, verily, desireth to see in you the manners of the inmates of Paradise in His mighty and most sublime Kingdom. Hold ye fast unto refinement under all conditions, that your eyes may be preserved from beholding what is repugnant both to your own selves and to the dwellers of Paradise. Should anyone depart therefrom, his deed shall at that moment be rendered vain; yet should he have good reason, God will excuse him. He, in truth, is the Gracious, the Most Bountiful.

47 He Who is the Dawning-place of God's Cause hath no partner in the Most Great Infallibility. He it is Who, in the kingdom of creation, is the Manifestation of "He doeth whatsoever He willeth". God hath reserved this distinction unto His own Self, and [pg 37]ordained for none a share in so sublime and transcendent a station. This is the Decree of God, concealed ere now within the veil of impenetrable mystery. We have disclosed it in this Revelation, and have thereby rent asunder the veils of such as have failed to recognize that which the Book of God set forth and who were numbered with the heedless.

48 Unto every father hath been enjoined the instruction of his son and daughter in the art of reading and writing and in all that hath been laid down in the Holy Tablet. He that putteth away that which is commanded unto him,

the Trustees are then to take from him that which is required for their instruction if he be wealthy and, if not, the matter devolveth upon the House of Justice. Verily have We made it a shelter for the poor and needy. He that bringeth up his son or the son of another, it is as though he hath brought up a son of Mine; upon him rest My glory, My loving-kindness, My mercy, that have compassed the world.

49 God hath imposed a fine on every adulterer and adulteress, to be paid to the House of Justice: nine mi<u>th</u>qáls of gold, to be doubled if they should repeat the offence. Such is the penalty which He Who is the Lord of Names hath assigned them in this world; and in the world to come He hath ordained for them a humiliating torment. Should anyone be afflicted by a sin, it behoveth him to repent thereof and return unto his Lord. He, verily, granteth forgiveness unto whomsoever He willeth, and none may question that which it pleaseth Him to ordain. He is, in truth, the Ever-Forgiving, the Almighty, the All-Praised.

[pg 38]
50 Beware lest ye be hindered by the veils of glory from partaking of the crystal waters of this living Fountain. Seize ye the chalice of salvation at this dawntide in the name of Him Who causeth the day to break, and drink your fill in praise of Him Who is the All-Glorious, the Incomparable.

51 We have made it lawful for you to listen to music and singing. Take heed, however, lest listening thereto should cause you to overstep the bounds of propriety and dignity. Let your joy be the joy born of My Most Great Name, a Name that bringeth rapture to the heart, and filleth with ecstasy the minds of all who have drawn nigh unto God. We, verily, have made music as a ladder for your souls, a means whereby they may be lifted up unto the realm on high; make it not, therefore, as wings to self and passion. Truly, We are loath to see you numbered

with the foolish.

52 We have decreed that a third part of all fines shall go to the Seat of Justice, and We admonish its men to observe pure justice, that they may expend what is thus accumulated for such purposes as have been enjoined upon them by Him Who is the All-Knowing, the All-Wise. O ye Men of Justice! Be ye, in the realm of God, shepherds unto His sheep and guard them from the ravening wolves that have appeared in disguise, even as ye would guard your own sons. Thus exhorteth you the Counsellor, the Faithful.

53 Should differences arise amongst you over any matter, refer it to God while the Sun still shineth above the horizon of this Heaven and, when it hath set, refer ye to whatsoever hath been sent down by Him. This, [pg 39]verily, is sufficient unto the peoples of the world. Say: Let not your hearts be perturbed, O people, when the glory of My Presence is withdrawn, and the ocean of My utterance is stilled. In My presence amongst you there is a wisdom, and in My absence there is yet another, inscrutable to all but God, the Incomparable, the All-Knowing. Verily, We behold you from Our realm of glory, and shall aid whosoever will arise for the triumph of Our Cause with the hosts of the Concourse on high and a company of Our favoured angels.

54 O peoples of the earth! God, the Eternal Truth, is My witness that streams of fresh and soft-flowing waters have gushed from the rocks through the sweetness of the words uttered by your Lord, the Unconstrained; and still ye slumber. Cast away that which ye possess, and, on the wings of detachment, soar beyond all created things. Thus biddeth you the Lord of creation, the movement of Whose Pen hath revolutionized the soul of mankind.

55 Know ye from what heights your Lord, the All-Glorious, is calling? Think ye that ye have recognized the Pen wherewith your Lord, the Lord of all names, commandeth you? Nay, by My life! Did ye but know it, ye

would renounce the world, and would hasten with your whole hearts to the presence of the Well-Beloved. Your spirits would be so transported by His Word as to throw into commotion the Greater World—how much more this small and petty one! Thus have the showers of My bounty been poured down from the heaven of My loving-kindness, as a token of My grace, that ye may be of the thankful.

[pg 40]
56 The penalties for wounding or striking a person depend upon the severity of the injury; for each degree the Lord of Judgement hath prescribed a certain indemnity. He is, in truth, the Ordainer, the Mighty, the Most Exalted. We shall, if it be Our Will, set forth these payments in their just degrees—this is a promise on Our part, and He, verily, is the Keeper of His pledge, the Knower of all things.

57 Verily, it is enjoined upon you to offer a feast, once in every month, though only water be served; for God hath purposed to bind hearts together, albeit through both earthly and heavenly means.

58 Beware lest the desires of the flesh and of a corrupt inclination provoke divisions among you. Be ye as the fingers of one hand, the members of one body. Thus counselleth you the Pen of Revelation, if ye be of them that believe.

59 Consider the mercy of God and His gifts. He enjoineth upon you that which shall profit you, though He Himself can well dispense with all creatures. Your evil doings can never harm Us, neither can your good works profit Us. We summon you wholly for the sake of God. To this every man of understanding and insight will testify.

60 If ye should hunt with beasts or birds of prey, invoke ye the Name of God when ye send them to pursue their quarry; for then whatever they catch shall be lawful unto you, even should ye find it to have died. He, verily, is the

Omniscient, the All-Informed. Take heed, however, that ye hunt not to excess. Tread ye the path of justice and equity in all things. Thus biddeth [pg 41]you He Who is the Dawning-place of Revelation, would that ye might comprehend.

61 God hath bidden you to show forth kindliness towards My kindred, but He hath granted them no right to the property of others. He, verily, is self-sufficient, above any need of His creatures.

62 Should anyone intentionally destroy a house by fire, him also shall ye burn; should anyone deliberately take another's life, him also shall ye put to death. Take ye hold of the precepts of God with all your strength and power, and abandon the ways of the ignorant. Should ye condemn the arsonist and the murderer to life imprisonment, it would be permissible according to the provisions of the Book. He, verily, hath power to ordain whatsoever He pleaseth.

63 God hath prescribed matrimony unto you. Beware that ye take not unto yourselves more wives than two. Whoso contenteth himself with a single partner from among the maidservants of God, both he and she shall live in tranquillity. And he who would take into his service a maid may do so with propriety. Such is the ordinance which, in truth and justice, hath been recorded by the Pen of Revelation. Enter into wedlock, O people, that ye may bring forth one who will make mention of Me amid My servants. This is My bidding unto you; hold fast to it as an assistance to yourselves.

64 O people of the world! Follow not the promptings of the self, for it summoneth insistently to wickedness and lust; follow, rather, Him Who is the Possessor of all created things, Who biddeth you to show forth piety, and manifest the fear of God. He, verily, is [pg 42]independent of all His creatures. Take heed not to stir up mischief in the land after it hath been set in order. Whoso acteth in this way is not of Us, and We are quit of

him. Such is the command which hath, through the power of truth, been made manifest from the heaven of Revelation.

65 It hath been laid down in the Bayán that marriage is dependent upon the consent of both parties. Desiring to establish love, unity and harmony amidst Our servants, We have conditioned it, once the couple's wish is known, upon the permission of their parents, lest enmity and rancour should arise amongst them. And in this We have yet other purposes. Thus hath Our commandment been ordained.

66 No marriage may be contracted without payment of a dowry, which hath been fixed for city-dwellers at nineteen mi<u>th</u><u>q</u>áls of pure gold, and for village-dwellers at the same amount in silver. Whoso wisheth to increase this sum, it is forbidden him to exceed the limit of ninety-five mi<u>th</u><u>q</u>áls. Thus hath the command been writ in majesty and power. If he content himself, however, with a payment of the lowest level, it shall be better for him according to the Book. God, verily, enricheth whomsoever He willeth through both heavenly and earthly means, and He, in truth, hath power over all things.

67 It hath been decreed by God that, should any one of His servants intend to travel, he must fix for his wife a time when he will return home. If he return by the promised time, he will have obeyed the bidding of his Lord and shall be numbered by the Pen of His behest [pg 43]among the righteous; otherwise, if there be good reason for delay, he must inform his wife and make the utmost endeavour to return to her. Should neither of these eventualities occur, it behoveth her to wait for a period of nine months, after which there is no impediment to her taking another husband; but should she wait longer, God, verily, loveth those women and men who show forth patience. Obey ye My commandments, and follow not the ungodly, they who have been reckoned as sinners in God's Holy Tablet. If,

during the period of her waiting, word should reach her from her husband, she should choose the course that is praiseworthy. He, of a truth, desireth that His servants and His handmaids should be at peace with one another; take heed lest ye do aught that may provoke intransigence amongst you. Thus hath the decree been fixed and the promise come to pass. If, however, news should reach her of her husband's death or murder, and be confirmed by general report, or by the testimony of two just witnesses, it behoveth her to remain single; then, upon completion of the fixed number of months, she is free to adopt the course of her choosing. Such is the bidding of Him Who is mighty and powerful in His command.

68 Should resentment or antipathy arise between husband and wife, he is not to divorce her but to bide in patience throughout the course of one whole year, that perchance the fragrance of affection may be renewed between them. If, upon the completion of this period, their love hath not returned, it is permissible for divorce to take place. God's wisdom, verily, hath [pg 44]encompassed all things. The Lord hath prohibited, in a Tablet inscribed by the Pen of His command, the practice to which ye formerly had recourse when thrice ye had divorced a woman. This He hath done as a favour on His part, that ye may be accounted among the thankful. He who hath divorced his wife may choose, upon the passing of each month, to remarry her when there is mutual affection and consent, so long as she hath not taken another husband. Should she have wed again, then, by this other union, the separation is confirmed and the matter is concluded unless, clearly, her circumstances change. Thus hath the decree been inscribed with majesty in this glorious Tablet by Him Who is the Dawning-place of Beauty.

69 If the wife accompany her husband on a journey, and differences arise between them on the way, he is required to provide her with her expenses for one whole year, and either to return her whence she came or to entrust her,

together with the necessaries for her journey, to a dependable person who is to escort her home. Thy Lord, verily, ordaineth as He pleaseth, by virtue of a sovereignty that overshadoweth the peoples of the earth.

70 Should a woman be divorced in consequence of a proven act of infidelity, she shall receive no maintenance during her period of waiting. Thus hath the day-star of Our commandment shone forth resplendent from the firmament of justice. Truly, the Lord loveth union and harmony and abhorreth separation and divorce. Live ye one with another, O people, in radiance and joy. By My life! All that are on earth shall [pg 45]pass away, while good deeds alone shall endure; to the truth of My words God doth Himself bear witness. Compose your differences, O My servants; then heed ye the admonition of Our Pen of Glory and follow not the arrogant and wayward.

71 Take heed lest the world beguile you as it beguiled the people who went before you! Observe ye the statutes and precepts of your Lord, and walk ye in this Way which hath been laid out before you in righteousness and truth. They who eschew iniquity and error, who adhere to virtue, are, in the sight of the one true God, among the choicest of His creatures; their names are extolled by the Concourse of the realms above, and by those who dwell in this Tabernacle which hath been raised in the name of God.

72 It is forbidden you to trade in slaves, be they men or women. It is not for him who is himself a servant to buy another of God’s servants, and this hath been prohibited in His Holy Tablet. Thus, by His mercy, hath the commandment been recorded by the Pen of justice. Let no man exalt himself above another; all are but bondslaves before the Lord, and all exemplify the truth that there is none other God but Him. He, verily, is the All-Wise, Whose wisdom encompasseth all things.

73 Adorn yourselves with the raiment of goodly deeds. He

whose deeds attain unto God's good pleasure is assuredly of the people of Bahá and is remembered before His throne. Assist ye the Lord of all creation with works of righteousness, and also through wisdom and utterance. Thus, indeed, have ye been commanded [pg 46]in most of the Tablets by Him Who is the All-Merciful. He, truly, is cognizant of what I say. Let none contend with another, and let no soul slay another; this, verily, is that which was forbidden you in a Book that hath lain concealed within the Tabernacle of glory. What! Would ye kill him whom God hath quickened, whom He hath endowed with spirit through a breath from Him? Grievous then would be your trespass before His throne! Fear God, and lift not the hand of injustice and oppression to destroy what He hath Himself raised up; nay, walk ye in the way of God, the True One. No sooner did the hosts of true knowledge appear, bearing the standards of Divine utterance, than the tribes of the religions were put to flight, save only those who willed to drink from the stream of everlasting life in a Paradise created by the breath of the All-Glorious.

74 God hath decreed, in token of His mercy unto His creatures, that semen is not unclean. Yield thanks unto Him with joy and radiance, and follow not such as are remote from the Dawning-place of His nearness. Arise ye, under all conditions, to render service to the Cause, for God will assuredly assist you through the power of His sovereignty which overshadoweth the worlds. Cleave ye unto the cord of refinement with such tenacity as to allow no trace of dirt to be seen upon your garments. Such is the injunction of One Who is sanctified above all refinement. Whoso falleth short of this standard with good reason shall incur no blame. God, verily, is the Forgiving, the Merciful. Wash ye every soiled thing with water that hath undergone no [pg 47]alteration in any one of the three respects; take heed not to use water that hath been altered through exposure to the air or to some other agent. Be ye the very essence of cleanliness amongst mankind. This, truly, is what your Lord, the

Incomparable, the All-Wise, desireth for you.

75 God hath, likewise, as a bounty from His presence, abolished the concept of "uncleanness", whereby divers things and peoples have been held to be impure. He, of a certainty, is the Ever-Forgiving, the Most Generous. Verily, all created things were immersed in the sea of purification when, on that first day of Ridván, We shed upon the whole of creation the splendours of Our most excellent Names and Our most exalted Attributes. This, verily, is a token of My loving providence, which hath encompassed all the worlds. Consort ye then with the followers of all religions, and proclaim ye the Cause of your Lord, the Most Compassionate; this is the very crown of deeds, if ye be of them who understand.

76 God hath enjoined upon you to observe the utmost cleanliness, to the extent of washing what is soiled with dust, let alone with hardened dirt and similar defilement. Fear Him, and be of those who are pure. Should the garb of anyone be visibly sullied, his prayers shall not ascend to God, and the celestial Concourse will turn away from him. Make use of rose-water, and of pure perfume; this, indeed, is that which God hath loved from the beginning that hath no beginning, in order that there may be diffused from you what your Lord, the Incomparable, the All-Wise, desireth.

[pg 48]
77 God hath relieved you of the ordinance laid down in the Bayán concerning the destruction of books. We have permitted you to read such sciences as are profitable unto you, not such as end in idle disputation; better is this for you, if ye be of them that comprehend.

78 O kings of the earth! He Who is the sovereign Lord of all is come. The Kingdom is God’s, the omnipotent Protector, the Self-Subsisting. Worship none but God, and, with radiant hearts, lift up your faces unto your Lord, the Lord of all names. This is a Revelation to which whatever ye possess can never be compared, could ye but know it.

79 We see you rejoicing in that which ye have amassed for others and shutting out yourselves from the worlds which naught except My guarded Tablet can reckon. The treasures ye have laid up have drawn you far away from your ultimate objective. This ill beseemeth you, could ye but understand it. Wash from your hearts all earthly defilements, and hasten to enter the Kingdom of your Lord, the Creator of earth and heaven, Who caused the world to tremble and all its peoples to wail, except them that have renounced all things and clung to that which the Hidden Tablet hath ordained.

80 This is the Day in which He Who held converse with God hath attained the light of the Ancient of Days, and quaffed the pure waters of reunion from this Cup that hath caused the seas to swell. Say: By the one true God! Sinai is circling round the Dayspring of Revelation, while from the heights of the Kingdom the Voice of the Spirit of God is heard proclaiming: "Bestir [pg 49]yourselves, ye proud ones of the earth, and hasten ye unto Him." Carmel hath, in this Day, hastened in longing adoration to attain His court, whilst from the heart of Zion there cometh the cry: "The promise is fulfilled. That which had been announced in the holy Writ of God, the Most Exalted, the Almighty, the Best-Beloved, is made manifest."

81 O kings of the earth! The Most Great Law hath been revealed in this Spot, this scene of transcendent splendour. Every hidden thing hath been brought to light by virtue of the Will of the Supreme Ordainer, He Who hath ushered in the Last Hour, through Whom the Moon hath been cleft, and every irrevocable decree expounded.

82 Ye are but vassals, O kings of the earth! He Who is the King of Kings hath appeared, arrayed in His most wondrous glory, and is summoning you unto Himself, the Help in Peril, the Self-Subsisting. Take heed lest pride deter you from recognizing the Source of Revelation, lest the things of this world shut you out as by a veil from Him Who is the Creator of heaven. Arise, and serve Him

Who is the Desire of all nations, Who hath created you through a word from Him, and ordained you to be, for all time, the emblems of His sovereignty.

83 By the righteousness of God! It is not Our wish to lay hands on your kingdoms. Our mission is to seize and possess the hearts of men. Upon them the eyes of Bahá are fastened. To this testifieth the Kingdom of Names, could ye but comprehend it. Whoso followeth his Lord will renounce the world and all that is therein; [pg 50]how much greater, then, must be the detachment of Him Who holdeth so august a station! Forsake your palaces, and haste ye to gain admittance into His Kingdom. This, indeed, will profit you both in this world and in the next. To this testifieth the Lord of the realm on high, did ye but know it.

84 How great the blessedness that awaiteth the king who will arise to aid My Cause in My kingdom, who will detach himself from all else but Me! Such a king is numbered with the companions of the Crimson Ark—the Ark which God hath prepared for the people of Bahá. All must glorify his name, must reverence his station, and aid him to unlock the cities with the keys of My Name, the omnipotent Protector of all that inhabit the visible and invisible kingdoms. Such a king is the very eye of mankind, the luminous ornament on the brow of creation, the fountainhead of blessings unto the whole world. Offer up, O people of Bahá, your substance, nay your very lives, for his assistance.

85 O Emperor of Austria! He Who is the Dayspring of God's Light dwelt in the prison of Akká at the time when thou didst set forth to visit the Aqsá Mosque. Thou passed Him by, and inquired not about Him by Whom every house is exalted and every lofty gate unlocked. We, verily, made it a place whereunto the world should turn, that they might remember Me, and yet thou hast rejected Him Who is the Object of this remembrance, when He appeared with the Kingdom of God, thy Lord and the

Lord of the worlds. We have been with thee at all times, and found thee clinging unto the Branch and heedless of the Root. Thy Lord, [pg 51]verily, is a witness unto what I say. We grieved to see thee circle round Our Name, whilst unaware of Us, though We were before thy face. Open thine eyes, that thou mayest behold this glorious Vision, and recognize Him Whom thou invokest in the daytime and in the night season, and gaze on the Light that shineth above this luminous Horizon.

86 Say: O King of Berlin! Give ear unto the Voice calling from this manifest Temple: "Verily, there is none other God but Me, the Everlasting, the Peerless, the Ancient of Days." Take heed lest pride debar thee from recognizing the Dayspring of Divine Revelation, lest earthly desires shut thee out, as by a veil, from the Lord of the Throne above and of the earth below. Thus counselleth thee the Pen of the Most High. He, verily, is the Most Gracious, the All-Bountiful. Do thou remember the one[1] whose power transcended thy power, and whose station excelled thy station. Where is he? Whither are gone the things he possessed? Take warning, and be not of them that are fast asleep. He it was who cast the Tablet of God behind him when We made known unto him what the hosts of tyranny had caused Us to suffer. Wherefore, disgrace assailed him from all sides, and he went down to dust in great loss. Think deeply, O King, concerning him, and concerning them who, like unto thee, have conquered cities and ruled over men. The All-Merciful brought them down from their palaces to their graves. Be warned, be of them who reflect.

[pg 52]
87 We have asked nothing from you. For the sake of God We, verily, exhort you, and will be patient as We have been patient in that which hath befallen Us at your hands, O concourse of kings!

88 Hearken ye, O Rulers of America and the Presidents of the Republics therein, unto that which the Dove is

warbling on the Branch of Eternity: "There is none other God but Me, the Ever-Abiding, the Forgiving, the All-Bountiful." Adorn ye the temple of dominion with the ornament of justice and of the fear of God, and its head with the crown of the remembrance of your Lord, the Creator of the heavens. Thus counselleth you He Who is the Dayspring of Names, as bidden by Him Who is the All-Knowing, the All-Wise. The Promised One hatthe Tablet ofh appeared in this glorified Station, whereat all beings, both seen and unseen, have rejoiced. Take ye advantage of the Day of God. Verily, to meet Him is better for you than all that whereon the sun shineth, could ye but know it. O concourse of rulers! Give ear unto that which hath been raised from the Dayspring of Grandeur: "Verily, there is none other God but Me, the Lord of Utterance, the All-Knowing." Bind ye the broken with the hands of justice, and crush the oppressor who flourisheth with the rod of the commandments of your Lord, the Ordainer, the All-Wise.

89 O people of Constantinople! Lo, from your midst We hear the baleful hooting of the owl. Hath the drunkenness of passion laid hold upon you, or is it that ye are sunk in heedlessness? O Spot that art situate on the shores of the two seas! The throne of tyranny hath, [pg 53]verily, been established upon thee, and the flame of hatred hath been kindled within thy bosom, in such wise that the Concourse on high and they who circle around the Exalted Throne have wailed and lamented. We behold in thee the foolish ruling over the wise, and darkness vaunting itself against the light. Thou art indeed filled with manifest pride. Hath thine outward splendour made thee vainglorious? By Him Who is the Lord of mankind! It shall soon perish, and thy daughters and thy widows and all the kindreds that dwell within thee shall lament. Thus informeth thee the All-Knowing, the All-Wise.

90 O banks of the Rhine! We have seen you covered with gore, inasmuch as the swords of retribution were drawn against you; and you shall have another turn. And We

hear the lamentations of Berlin, though she be today in conspicuous glory.

91 Let nothing grieve thee, O Land of Tá,[2] for God hath chosen thee to be the source of the joy of all mankind. He shall, if it be His Will, bless thy throne with one who will rule with justice, who will gather together the flock of God which the wolves have scattered. Such a ruler will, with joy and gladness, turn his face towards, and extend his favours unto, the people of Bahá. He indeed is accounted in the sight of God as a jewel among men. Upon him rest forever the glory of God and the glory of all that dwell in the kingdom of His revelation.

92 Rejoice with great joy, for God hath made thee [pg 54]"the Dayspring of His light", inasmuch as within thee was born the Manifestation of His Glory. Be thou glad for this name that hath been conferred upon thee—a name through which the Day-Star of grace hath shed its splendour, through which both earth and heaven have been illumined.

93 Erelong will the state of affairs within thee be changed, and the reins of power fall into the hands of the people. Verily, thy Lord is the All-Knowing. His authority embraceth all things. Rest thou assured in the gracious favour of thy Lord. The eye of His loving-kindness shall everlastingly be directed towards thee. The day is approaching when thy agitation will have been transmuted into peace and quiet calm. Thus hath it been decreed in the wondrous Book.

94 O Land of Kh̲á![3] We hear from thee the voice of heroes, raised in glorification of thy Lord, the All-Possessing, the Most Exalted. Blessed the day on which the banners of the divine Names shall be upraised in the kingdom of creation in My Name, the All-Glorious. On that day the faithful shall rejoice in the victory of God, and the disbelievers shall lament.

95 None must contend with those who wield authority

over the people; leave unto them that which is theirs, and direct your attention to men's hearts.

96 O Most Mighty Ocean! Sprinkle upon the nations that with which Thou hast been charged by Him Who is the Sovereign of Eternity, and adorn the temples of all the dwellers of the earth with the vesture of His laws [pg 55]through which all hearts will rejoice and all eyes be brightened.

97 Should anyone acquire one hundred mit̲hq̲áls of gold, nineteen mit̲hq̲áls thereof are God's and to be rendered unto Him, the Fashioner of earth and heaven. Take heed, O people, lest ye deprive yourselves of so great a bounty. This We have commanded you, though We are well able to dispense with you and with all who are in the heavens and on earth; in it there are benefits and wisdoms beyond the ken of anyone but God, the Omniscient, the All-Informed. Say: By this means He hath desired to purify what ye possess and to enable you to draw nigh unto such stations as none can comprehend save those whom God hath willed. He, in truth, is the Beneficent, the Gracious, the Bountiful. O people! Deal not faithlessly with the Right of God, nor, without His leave, make free with its disposal. Thus hath His commandment been established in the holy Tablets, and in this exalted Book. He who dealeth faithlessly with God shall in justice meet with faithlessness himself; he, however, who acteth in accordance with God's bidding shall receive a blessing from the heaven of the bounty of his Lord, the Gracious, the Bestower, the Generous, the Ancient of Days. He, verily, hath willed for you that which is yet beyond your knowledge, but which shall be known to you when, after this fleeting life, your souls soar heavenwards and the trappings of your earthly joys are folded up. Thus admonisheth you He in Whose possession is the Guarded Tablet.

98 Various petitions have come before Our throne [pg 56]from the believers, concerning laws from God, the

Lord of the seen and the unseen, the Lord of all worlds. We have, in consequence, revealed this Holy Tablet and arrayed it with the mantle of His Law that haply the people may keep the commandments of their Lord. Similar requests had been made of Us over several previous years but We had, in Our wisdom, withheld Our Pen until, in recent days, letters arrived from a number of the friends, and We have therefore responded, through the power of truth, with that which shall quicken the hearts of men.

99 Say: O leaders of religion! Weigh not the Book of God with such standards and sciences as are current amongst you, for the Book itself is the unerring Balance established amongst men. In this most perfect Balance whatsoever the peoples and kindreds of the earth possess must be weighed, while the measure of its weight should be tested according to its own standard, did ye but know it.

100 The eye of My loving-kindness weepeth sore over you, inasmuch as ye have failed to recognize the One upon Whom ye have been calling in the daytime and in the night season, at even and at morn. Advance, O people, with snow-white faces and radiant hearts, unto the blest and crimson Spot, wherein the Sadratu'l-Muntahá is calling: "Verily, there is none other God beside Me, the Omnipotent Protector, the Self-Subsisting!"

101 O ye leaders of religion! Who is the man amongst you that can rival Me in vision or insight? Where is he to be found that dareth to claim to be My equal in [pg 57]utterance or wisdom? No, by My Lord, the All-Merciful! All on the earth shall pass away; and this is the face of your Lord, the Almighty, the Well-Beloved.

102 We have decreed, O people, that the highest and last end of all learning be the recognition of Him Who is the Object of all knowledge; and yet, behold how ye have allowed your learning to shut you out, as by a veil, from Him Who is the Dayspring of this Light, through Whom every hidden thing hath been revealed. Could ye but

discover the source whence the splendour of this utterance is diffused, ye would cast away the peoples of the world and all that they possess, and would draw nigh unto this most blessed Seat of glory.

103 Say: This, verily, is the heaven in which the Mother Book is treasured, could ye but comprehend it. He it is Who hath caused the Rock to shout, and the Burning Bush to lift up its voice, upon the Mount rising above the Holy Land, and proclaim: "The Kingdom is God's, the sovereign Lord of all, the All-Powerful, the Loving!"

104 We have not entered any school, nor read any of your dissertations. Incline your ears to the words of this unlettered One, wherewith He summoneth you unto God, the Ever-Abiding. Better is this for you than all the treasures of the earth, could ye but comprehend it.

105 Whoso interpreteth what hath been sent down from the heaven of Revelation, and altereth its evident meaning, he, verily, is of them that have perverted the Sublime Word of God, and is of the lost ones in the Lucid Book.

106 It hath been enjoined upon you to pare your nails, [pg 58]to bathe yourselves each week in water that covereth your bodies, and to clean yourselves with whatsoever ye have formerly employed. Take heed lest through negligence ye fail to observe that which hath been prescribed unto you by Him Who is the Incomparable, the Gracious. Immerse yourselves in clean water; it is not permissible to bathe yourselves in water that hath already been used. See that ye approach not the public pools of Persian baths; whoso maketh his way toward such baths will smell their fetid odour ere he entereth therein. Shun them, O people, and be not of those who ignominiously accept such vileness. In truth, they are as sinks of foulness and contamination, if ye be of them that apprehend. Avoid ye likewise the malodorous pools in the courtyards of Persian homes, and be ye of the pure and sanctified. Truly, We desire to

behold you as manifestations of paradise on earth, that there may be diffused from you such fragrance as shall rejoice the hearts of the favoured of God. If the bather, instead of entering the water, wash himself by pouring it upon his body, it shall be better for him and shall absolve him of the need for bodily immersion. The Lord, verily, hath willed, as a bounty from His presence, to make life easier for you that ye may be of those who are truly thankful.

107 It is forbidden you to wed your fathers' wives. We shrink, for very shame, from treating of the subject of boys. Fear ye the Merciful, O peoples of the world! Commit not that which is forbidden you in Our Holy Tablet, and be not of those who rove distractedly in the wilderness of their desires.

[pg 59]
108 To none is it permitted to mutter sacred verses before the public gaze as he walketh in the street or marketplace; nay rather, if he wish to magnify the Lord, it behoveth him to do so in such places as have been erected for this purpose, or in his own home. This is more in keeping with sincerity and godliness. Thus hath the sun of Our commandment shone forth above the horizon of Our utterance. Blessed, then, be those who do Our bidding.

109 Unto everyone hath been enjoined the writing of a will. The testator should head this document with the adornment of the Most Great Name, bear witness therein unto the oneness of God in the Dayspring of His Revelation, and make mention, as he may wish, of that which is praiseworthy, so that it may be a testimony for him in the kingdoms of Revelation and Creation and a treasure with his Lord, the Supreme Protector, the Faithful.

110 All Feasts have attained their consummation in the two Most Great Festivals, and in the two other Festivals that fall on the twin days—the first of the Most Great

Festivals being those days whereon the All-Merciful shed upon the whole of creation the effulgent glory of His most excellent Names and His most exalted Attributes, and the second being that day on which We raised up the One Who announced unto mankind the glad tidings of this Name, through which the dead have been resurrected and all who are in the heavens and on earth have been gathered together. Thus hath it been decreed by Him Who is the Ordainer, the Omniscient.

[pg 60]
111 Happy the one who entereth upon the first day of the month of Bahá, the day which God hath consecrated to this Great Name. And blessed be he who evidenceth on this day the bounties that God hath bestowed upon him; he, verily, is of those who show forth thanks to God through actions betokening the Lord's munificence which hath encompassed all the worlds. Say: This day, verily, is the crown of all the months and the source thereof, the day on which the breath of life is wafted over all created things. Great is the blessedness of him who greeteth it with radiance and joy. We testify that he is, in truth, among those who are blissful.

112 Say: The Most Great Festival is, indeed, the King of Festivals. Call ye to mind, O people, the bounty which God hath conferred upon you. Ye were sunk in slumber, and lo! He aroused you by the reviving breezes of His Revelation, and made known unto you His manifest and undeviating Path.

113 Resort ye, in times of sickness, to competent physicians; We have not set aside the use of material means, rather have We confirmed it through this Pen, which God hath made to be the Dawning-place of His shining and glorious Cause.

114 God had formerly laid upon each one of the believers the duty of offering before Our throne priceless gifts from among his possessions. Now, in token of Our gracious favour, We have absolved them of this obligation. He, of a

truth, is the Most Generous, the All-Bountiful.

[pg 61]
115 Blessed is he who, at the hour of dawn, centring his thoughts on God, occupied with His remembrance, and supplicating His forgiveness, directeth his steps to the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár and, entering therein, seateth himself in silence to listen to the verses of God, the Sovereign, the Mighty, the All-Praised. Say: The Mashriqu'l-Adhkár is each and every building which hath been erected in cities and villages for the celebration of My praise. Such is the name by which it hath been designated before the throne of glory, were ye of those who understand.

116 They who recite the verses of the All-Merciful in the most melodious of tones will perceive in them that with which the sovereignty of earth and heaven can never be compared. From them they will inhale the divine fragrance of My worlds—worlds which today none can discern save those who have been endowed with vision through this sublime, this beauteous Revelation. Say: These verses draw hearts that are pure unto those spiritual worlds that can neither be expressed in words nor intimated by allusion. Blessed be those who hearken.

117 Assist ye, O My people, My chosen servants who have arisen to make mention of Me among My creatures and to exalt My Word throughout My realm. These, truly, are the stars of the heaven of My loving providence and the lamps of My guidance unto all mankind. But he whose words conflict with that which hath been sent down in My Holy Tablets is not of Me. Beware lest ye follow any impious pretender. These Tablets are embellished with the seal of Him Who [pg 62]causeth the dawn to appear, Who lifteth up His voice between the heavens and the earth. Lay hold on this Sure Handle and on the Cord of My mighty and unassailable Cause.

118 The Lord hath granted leave to whosoever desireth it that he be instructed in the divers tongues of the world that he may deliver the Message of the Cause of God

throughout the East and throughout the West, that he make mention of Him amidst the kindreds and peoples of the world in such wise that hearts may revive and the mouldering bone be quickened.

119 It is inadmissible that man, who hath been endowed with reason, should consume that which stealeth it away. Nay, rather it behoveth him to comport himself in a manner worthy of the human station, and not in accordance with the misdeeds of every heedless and wavering soul.

120 Adorn your heads with the garlands of trustworthiness and fidelity, your hearts with the attire of the fear of God, your tongues with absolute truthfulness, your bodies with the vesture of courtesy. These are in truth seemly adornings unto the temple of man, if ye be of them that reflect. Cling, O ye people of Bahá, to the cord of servitude unto God, the True One, for thereby your stations shall be made manifest, your names written and preserved, your ranks raised and your memory exalted in the Preserved Tablet. Beware lest the dwellers on earth hinder you from this glorious and exalted station. Thus have We exhorted you in most of Our Epistles and now in this, Our Holy Tablet, above which hath beamed the Day-Star of the [pg 63]Laws of the Lord, your God, the Powerful, the All-Wise.

121 When the ocean of My presence hath ebbed and the Book of My Revelation is ended, turn your faces toward Him Whom God hath purposed, Who hath branched from this Ancient Root.

122 Consider the pettiness of men's minds. They ask for that which injureth them, and cast away the thing that profiteth them. They are, indeed, of those that are far astray. We find some men desiring liberty, and priding themselves therein. Such men are in the depths of ignorance.

123 Liberty must, in the end, lead to sedition, whose

flames none can quench. Thus warneth you He Who is the Reckoner, the All-Knowing. Know ye that the embodiment of liberty and its symbol is the animal. That which beseemeth man is submission unto such restraints as will protect him from his own ignorance, and guard him against the harm of the mischief-maker. Liberty causeth man to overstep the bounds of propriety, and to infringe on the dignity of his station. It debaseth him to the level of extreme depravity and wickedness.

124 Regard men as a flock of sheep that need a shepherd for their protection. This, verily, is the truth, the certain truth. We approve of liberty in certain circumstances, and refuse to sanction it in others. We, verily, are the All-Knowing.

125 Say: True liberty consisteth in man's submission unto My commandments, little as ye know it. Were men to observe that which We have sent down unto [pg 64]them from the Heaven of Revelation, they would, of a certainty, attain unto perfect liberty. Happy is the man that hath apprehended the Purpose of God in whatever He hath revealed from the Heaven of His Will that pervadeth all created things. Say: The liberty that profiteth you is to be found nowhere except in complete servitude unto God, the Eternal Truth. Whoso hath tasted of its sweetness will refuse to barter it for all the dominion of earth and heaven.

126 In the Bayán it had been forbidden you to ask Us questions. The Lord hath now relieved you of this prohibition, that ye may be free to ask what you need to ask, but not such idle questions as those on which the men of former times were wont to dwell. Fear God, and be ye of the righteous! Ask ye that which shall be of profit to you in the Cause of God and His dominion, for the portals of His tender compassion have been opened before all who dwell in heaven and on earth.

127 The number of months in a year, appointed in the Book of God, is nineteen. Of these the first hath been

adorned with this Name which overshadoweth the whole of creation.

128 The Lord hath decreed that the dead should be interred in coffins made of crystal, of hard, resistant stone, or of wood that is both fine and durable, and that graven rings should be placed upon their fingers. He, verily, is the Supreme Ordainer, the One apprised of all.

129 The inscription on these rings should read, for men: "Unto God belongeth all that is in the heavens and on the earth and whatsoever is between them, and [pg 65]He, in truth, hath knowledge of all things"; and for women: "Unto God belongeth the dominion of the heavens and the earth and whatsoever is between them, and He, in truth, is potent over all things". These are the verses that were revealed aforetime, but lo, the Point of the Bayán now calleth out, exclaiming, "O Best-Beloved of the worlds! Reveal Thou in their stead such words as will waft the fragrance of Thy gracious favours over all mankind. We have announced unto everyone that one single word from Thee excelleth all that hath been sent down in the Bayán. Thou, indeed, hast power to do what pleaseth Thee. Deprive not Thy servants of the overflowing bounties of the ocean of Thy mercy! Thou, in truth, art He Whose grace is infinite." Behold, We have hearkened to His call, and now fulfil His wish. He, verily, is the Best-Beloved, the Answerer of prayers. If the following verse, which hath at this moment been sent down by God, be engraved upon the burial-rings of both men and women, it shall be better for them; We, of a certainty, are the Supreme Ordainer: "I came forth from God, and return unto Him, detached from all save Him, holding fast to His Name, the Merciful, the Compassionate." Thus doth the Lord single out whomsoever He desireth for a bounty from His presence. He is, in very truth, the God of might and power.

130 The Lord hath decreed, moreover, that the deceased should be enfolded in five sheets of silk or cotton. For

those whose means are limited a single sheet of either fabric will suffice. Thus hath it been ordained by Him Who is the All-Knowing, the All-Informed. [pg 66]It is forbidden you to transport the body of the deceased a greater distance than one hour's journey from the city; rather should it be interred, with radiance and serenity, in a nearby place.

131 God hath removed the restrictions on travel that had been imposed in the Bayán. He, verily, is the Unconstrained; He doeth as He pleaseth and ordaineth whatsoever He willeth.

132 O peoples of the world! Give ear unto the call of Him Who is the Lord of Names, Who proclaimeth unto you from His habitation in the Most Great Prison: "Verily, no God is there but Me, the Powerful, the Mighty, the All-Subduing, the Most Exalted, the Omniscient, the All-Wise." In truth, there is no God but Him, the Omnipotent Ruler of the worlds. Were it His Will, He would, through but a single word proceeding from His presence, lay hold on all mankind. Beware lest ye hesitate in your acceptance of this Cause—a Cause before which the Concourse on high and the dwellers of the Cities of Names have bowed down. Fear God, and be not of those who are shut out as by a veil. Burn ye away the veils with the fire of My love, and dispel ye the mists of vain imaginings by the power of this Name through which We have subdued the entire creation.

133 Raise up and exalt the two Houses in the Twin Hallowed Spots, and the other sites wherein the throne of your Lord, the All-Merciful, hath been established. Thus commandeth you the Lord of every understanding heart.

134 Be watchful lest the concerns and preoccupations [pg 67]of this world prevent you from observing that which hath been enjoined upon you by Him Who is the Mighty, the Faithful. Be ye the embodiments of such steadfastness amidst mankind that ye will not be kept back from God by the doubts of those who disbelieved in Him when He

manifested Himself, invested with a mighty sovereignty. Take heed lest ye be prevented by aught that hath been recorded in the Book from hearkening unto this, the Living Book, Who proclaimeth the truth: "Verily, there is no God but Me, the Most Excellent, the All-Praised." Look ye with the eye of equity upon Him Who hath descended from the heaven of Divine will and power, and be not of those who act unjustly.

135 Call then to mind these words which have streamed forth, in tribute to this Revelation, from the Pen of Him Who was My Herald, and consider what the hands of the oppressors have wrought throughout My days. Truly they are numbered with the lost. He said: "Should ye attain the presence of Him Whom We shall make manifest, beseech ye God, in His bounty, to grant that He might deign to seat Himself upon your couches, for that act in itself would confer upon you matchless and surpassing honour. Should He drink a cup of water in your homes, this would be of greater consequence for you than your proffering unto every soul, nay unto every created thing, the water of its very life. Know this, O ye My servants!"

136 Such are the words with which My Forerunner hath extolled My Being, could ye but understand. Whoso reflecteth upon these verses, and realizeth what [pg 68]hidden pearls have been enshrined within them, will, by the righteousness of God, perceive the fragrance of the All-Merciful wafting from the direction of this Prison and will, with his whole heart, hasten unto Him with such ardent longing that the hosts of earth and heaven would be powerless to deter him. Say: This is a Revelation around which every proof and testimony doth circle. Thus hath it been sent down by your Lord, the God of Mercy, if ye be of them that judge aright. Say: This is the very soul of all Scriptures which hath been breathed into the Pen of the Most High, causing all created beings to be dumbfounded, save only those who have been enraptured by the gentle breezes of My loving-kindness and the sweet savours of My bounties which have pervaded the whole of

creation.

137 O people of the Bayán! Fear ye the Most Merciful and consider what He hath revealed in another passage. He said: "The Qiblih is indeed He Whom God will make manifest; whenever He moveth, it moveth, until He shall come to rest." Thus was it set down by the Supreme Ordainer when He desired to make mention of this Most Great Beauty. Meditate on this, O people, and be not of them that wander distraught in the wilderness of error. If ye reject Him at the bidding of your idle fancies, where then is the Qiblih to which ye will turn, O assemblage of the heedless? Ponder ye this verse, and judge equitably before God, that haply ye may glean the pearls of mysteries from the ocean that surgeth in My Name, the All-Glorious, the Most High.

138 Let none, in this Day, hold fast to aught save that [pg 69]which hath been manifested in this Revelation. Such is the decree of God, aforetime and hereafter—a decree wherewith the Scriptures of the Messengers of old have been adorned. Such is the admonition of the Lord, aforetime and hereafter—an admonition wherewith the preamble to the Book of Life hath been embellished, did ye but perceive it. Such is the commandment of the Lord, aforetime and hereafter; beware lest ye choose instead the part of ignominy and abasement. Naught shall avail you in this Day but God, nor is there any refuge to flee to save Him, the Omniscient, the All-Wise. Whoso hath known Me hath known the Goal of all desire, and whoso hath turned unto Me hath turned unto the Object of all adoration. Thus hath it been set forth in the Book, and thus hath it been decreed by God, the Lord of all worlds. To read but one of the verses of My Revelation is better than to peruse the Scriptures of both the former and latter generations. This is the Utterance of the All-Merciful, would that ye had ears to hear! Say: This is the essence of knowledge, did ye but understand.

139 And now consider what hath been revealed in yet

another passage, that perchance ye may forsake your own concepts and set your faces towards God, the Lord of being. He[4] hath said: "It is unlawful to enter into marriage save with a believer in the Bayán. Should only one party to a marriage embrace this Cause, his or her possessions will become unlawful to the other, until such time as the latter hath converted. This law, [pg 70]however, will only take effect after the exaltation of the Cause of Him Whom We shall manifest in truth, or of that which hath already been made manifest in justice. Ere this, ye are at liberty to enter into wedlock as ye wish, that haply by this means ye may exalt the Cause of God." Thus hath the Nightingale sung with sweet melody upon the celestial bough, in praise of its Lord, the All-Merciful. Well is it with them that hearken.

140 O people of the Bayán, I adjure you by your Lord, the God of mercy, to look with the eye of fairness upon this utterance which hath been sent down through the power of truth, and not to be of those who see the testimony of God yet reject and deny it. They, in truth, are of those who will assuredly perish. The Point of the Bayán hath explicitly made mention in this verse of the exaltation of My Cause before His own Cause; unto this will testify every just and understanding mind. As ye can readily witness in this day, its exaltation is such as none can deny save those whose eyes are drunken in this mortal life and whom a humiliating chastisement awaiteth in the life to come.

141 Say: By the righteousness of God! I, verily, am His[5] Best-Beloved; and at this moment He listeneth to these verses descending from the Heaven of Revelation and bewaileth the wrongs ye have committed in these days. Fear God, and join not with the aggressor. Say: O people, should ye choose to disbelieve in Him,[6] refrain [pg 71]at least from rising up against Him. By God! Sufficient are the hosts of tyranny that are leagued against Him!

142 Verily, He[7] revealed certain laws so that, in this

Dispensation, the Pen of the Most High might have no need to move in aught but the glorification of His own transcendent Station and His most effulgent Beauty. Since, however, We have wished to evidence Our bounty unto you, We have, through the power of truth, set forth these laws with clarity and mitigated what We desire you to observe. He, verily, is the Munificent, the Generous.

143 He[8] hath previously made known unto you that which would be uttered by this Dayspring of Divine wisdom. He said, and He speaketh the truth: "He[9] is the One Who will under all conditions proclaim: 'Verily, there is none other God besides Me, the One, the Incomparable, the Omniscient, the All-Informed.'" This is a station which God hath assigned exclusively to this sublime, this unique and wondrous Revelation. This is a token of His bounteous favour, if ye be of them who comprehend, and a sign of His irresistible decree. This is His Most Great Name, His Most Exalted Word, and the Dayspring of His Most Excellent Titles, if ye could understand. Nay more, through Him every Fountainhead, every Dawning-place of Divine guidance is made manifest. Reflect, O people, on that which hath been sent down in truth; ponder thereon, and be not of the transgressors.

[pg 72]
144 Consort with all religions with amity and concord, that they may inhale from you the sweet fragrance of God. Beware lest amidst men the flame of foolish ignorance overpower you. All things proceed from God and unto Him they return. He is the source of all things and in Him all things are ended.

145 Take heed that ye enter no house in the absence of its owner, except with his permission. Comport yourselves with propriety under all conditions, and be not numbered with the wayward.

146 It hath been enjoined upon you to purify your means of sustenance and other such things through payment of Zakát. Thus hath it been prescribed in this exalted Tablet

by Him Who is the Revealer of verses. We shall, if it be God's will and purpose, set forth erelong the measure of its assessment. He, verily, expoundeth whatsoever He desireth by virtue of His own knowledge, and He, of a truth, is Omniscient and All-Wise.

147 It is unlawful to beg, and it is forbidden to give to him who beggeth. All have been enjoined to earn a living, and as for those who are incapable of doing so, it is incumbent on the Deputies of God and on the wealthy to make adequate provision for them. Keep ye the statutes and commandments of God; nay, guard them as ye would your very eyes, and be not of those who suffer grievous loss.

148 Ye have been forbidden in the Book of God to engage in contention and conflict, to strike another, or to commit similar acts whereby hearts and souls may be [pg 73]saddened. A fine of nineteen mi<u>th</u>q<u></u>áls of gold had formerly been prescribed by Him Who is the Lord of all mankind for anyone who was the cause of sadness to another; in this Dispensation, however, He hath absolved you thereof and exhorteth you to show forth righteousness and piety. Such is the commandment which He hath enjoined upon you in this resplendent Tablet. Wish not for others what ye wish not for yourselves; fear God, and be not of the prideful. Ye are all created out of water, and unto dust shall ye return. Reflect upon the end that awaiteth you, and walk not in the ways of the oppressor. Give ear unto the verses of God which He Who is the sacred Lote-Tree reciteth unto you. They are assuredly the infallible balance, established by God, the Lord of this world and the next. Through them the soul of man is caused to wing its flight towards the Dayspring of Revelation, and the heart of every true believer is suffused with light. Such are the laws which God hath enjoined upon you, such His commandments prescribed unto you in His Holy Tablet; obey them with joy and gladness, for this is best for you, did ye but know.

149 Recite ye the verses of God every morn and eventide. Whoso faileth to recite them hath not been faithful to the Covenant of God and His Testament, and whoso turneth away from these holy verses in this Day is of those who throughout eternity have turned away from God. Fear ye God, O My servants, one and all. Pride not yourselves on much reading of the verses or on a multitude of pious acts by night and day; for were a man to read a single verse with joy and radiance [pg 74]it would be better for him than to read with lassitude all the Holy Books of God, the Help in Peril, the Self-Subsisting. Read ye the sacred verses in such measure that ye be not overcome by languor and despondency. Lay not upon your souls that which will weary them and weigh them down, but rather what will lighten and uplift them, so that they may soar on the wings of the Divine verses towards the Dawning-place of His manifest signs; this will draw you nearer to God, did ye but comprehend.

150 Teach your children the verses revealed from the heaven of majesty and power, so that, in most melodious tones, they may recite the Tablets of the All-Merciful in the alcoves within the Mas̲h̲riqu'l-Ad̲h̲kárs. Whoever hath been transported by the rapture born of adoration for My Name, the Most Compassionate, will recite the verses of God in such wise as to captivate the hearts of those yet wrapped in slumber. Well is it with him who hath quaffed the Mystic Wine of everlasting life from the utterance of his merciful Lord in My Name—a Name through which every lofty and majestic mountain hath been reduced to dust.

151 Ye have been enjoined to renew the furnishings of your homes after the passing of each nineteen years; thus hath it been ordained by One Who is Omniscient and All-Perceiving. He, verily, is desirous of refinement, both for you yourselves and for all that ye possess; lay not aside the fear of God and be not of the negligent. Whoso findeth that his means are insufficient to this purpose hath been excused by God, the Ever-Forgiving, the Most

Bounteous.

[pg 75]
152 Wash your feet once every day in summer, and once every three days during winter.

153 Should anyone wax angry with you, respond to him with gentleness; and should anyone upbraid you, forbear to upbraid him in return, but leave him to himself and put your trust in God, the omnipotent Avenger, the Lord of might and justice.

154 Ye have been prohibited from making use of pulpits. Whoso wisheth to recite unto you the verses of his Lord, let him sit on a chair placed upon a dais, that he may make mention of God, his Lord, and the Lord of all mankind. It is pleasing to God that ye should seat yourselves on chairs and benches as a mark of honour for the love ye bear for Him and for the Manifestation of His glorious and resplendent Cause.

155 Gambling and the use of opium have been forbidden unto you. Eschew them both, O people, and be not of those who transgress. Beware of using any substance that induceth sluggishness and torpor in the human temple and inflicteth harm upon the body. We, verily, desire for you naught save what shall profit you, and to this bear witness all created things, had ye but ears to hear.

156 Whensoever ye be invited to a banquet or festive occasion, respond with joy and gladness, and whoever fulfilleth his promise will be safe from reproof. This is a Day on which each of God’s wise decrees hath been expounded.

157 Behold, the "mystery of the Great Reversal in the Sign of the Sovereign" hath now been made manifest. Well is it with him whom God hath aided to recognize [pg 76]the "Six" raised up by virtue of this "Upright Alif"; he, verily, is of those whose faith is true. How many the outwardly pious who have turned away, and how many the

wayward who have drawn nigh, exclaiming: "All praise be to Thee, O Thou the Desire of the worlds!" In truth, it is in the hand of God to give what He willeth to whomsoever He willeth, and to withhold what He pleaseth from whomsoever He may wish. He knoweth the inner secrets of the hearts and the meaning hidden in a mocker's wink. How many an embodiment of heedlessness who came unto Us with purity of heart have We established upon the seat of Our acceptance; and how many an exponent of wisdom have We in all justice consigned to the fire. We are, in truth, the One to judge. He it is Who is the manifestation of "God doeth whatsoever He pleaseth", and abideth upon the throne of "He ordaineth whatsoever He chooseth".

158 Blessed is the one who discovereth the fragrance of inner meanings from the traces of this Pen through whose movement the breezes of God are wafted over the entire creation, and through whose stillness the very essence of tranquillity appeareth in the realm of being. Glorified be the All-Merciful, the Revealer of so inestimable a bounty. Say: Because He bore injustice, justice hath appeared on earth, and because He accepted abasement, the majesty of God hath shone forth amidst mankind.

159 It hath been forbidden you to carry arms unless essential, and permitted you to attire yourselves in silk. The Lord hath relieved you, as a bounty on His part, of the restrictions that formerly applied to clothing and to [pg 77]the trim of the beard. He, verily, is the Ordainer, the Omniscient. Let there be naught in your demeanour of which sound and upright minds would disapprove, and make not yourselves the playthings of the ignorant. Well is it with him who hath adorned himself with the vesture of seemly conduct and a praiseworthy character. He is assuredly reckoned with those who aid their Lord through distinctive and outstanding deeds.

160 Promote ye the development of the cities of God and His countries, and glorify Him therein in the joyous

accents of His well-favoured ones. In truth, the hearts of men are edified through the power of the tongue, even as houses and cities are built up by the hand and other means. We have assigned to every end a means for its accomplishment; avail yourselves thereof, and place your trust and confidence in God, the Omniscient, the All-Wise.

161 Blessed is the man that hath acknowledged his belief in God and in His signs, and recognized that "He shall not be asked of His doings". Such a recognition hath been made by God the ornament of every belief and its very foundation. Upon it must depend the acceptance of every goodly deed. Fasten your eyes upon it, that haply the whisperings of the rebellious may not cause you to slip.

162 Were He to decree as lawful the thing which from time immemorial had been forbidden, and forbid that which had, at all times, been regarded as lawful, to none is given the right to question His authority. Whoso will hesitate, though it be for less than a moment, should be regarded as a transgressor.

[pg 78]
163 Whoso hath not recognized this sublime and fundamental verity, and hath failed to attain this most exalted station, the winds of doubt will agitate him, and the sayings of the infidels will distract his soul. He that hath acknowledged this principle will be endowed with the most perfect constancy. All honour to this all-glorious station, the remembrance of which adorneth every exalted Tablet. Such is the teaching which God bestoweth on you, a teaching that will deliver you from all manner of doubt and perplexity, and enable you to attain unto salvation in both this world and in the next. He, verily, is the Ever-Forgiving, the Most Bountiful. He it is Who hath sent forth the Messengers, and sent down the Books to proclaim "There is none other God but Me, the Almighty, the All-Wise".

164 O Land of Káf and Rá![10] We, verily, behold thee in a state displeasing unto God, and see proceeding from thee

that which is inscrutable to anyone save Him, the Omniscient, the All-Informed; and We perceive that which secretly and stealthily diffuseth from thee. With Us is the knowledge of all things, inscribed in a lucid Tablet. Sorrow not for that which hath befallen thee. Erelong will God raise up within thee men endued with mighty valour, who will magnify My Name with such constancy that neither will they be deterred by the evil suggestions of the divines, nor will they be kept back by the insinuations of the sowers of doubt. With their own eyes will they behold God, and with their own lives will they render [pg 79]Him victorious. These, truly, are of those who are steadfast.

165 O concourse of divines! When My verses were sent down, and My clear tokens were revealed, We found you behind the veils. This, verily, is a strange thing. Ye glory in My Name, yet ye recognized Me not at the time your Lord, the All-Merciful, appeared amongst you with proof and testimony. We have rent the veils asunder. Beware lest ye shut out the people by yet another veil. Pluck asunder the chains of vain imaginings, in the name of the Lord of all men, and be not of the deceitful. Should ye turn unto God and embrace His Cause, spread not disorder within it, and measure not the Book of God with your selfish desires. This, verily, is the counsel of God aforetime and hereafter, and to this God's witnesses and chosen ones, yea, each and every one of Us, do solemnly attest.

166 Call ye to mind the shaykh whose name was Muḥammad-Ḥasan, who ranked among the most learned divines of his day. When the True One was made manifest, this shaykh, along with others of his calling, rejected Him, while a sifter of wheat and barley accepted Him and turned unto the Lord. Though he was occupied both night and day in setting down what he conceived to be the laws and ordinances of God, yet when He Who is the Unconstrained appeared, not one letter thereof availed him, or he would not have turned away from a

Countenance that hath illumined the faces of the well-favoured of the Lord. Had ye believed in God when He revealed Himself, the people would not have turned aside from [pg 80]Him, nor would the things ye witness today have befallen Us. Fear God, and be not of the heedless.

167 Beware lest any name debar you from Him Who is the Possessor of all names, or any word shut you out from this Remembrance of God, this Source of Wisdom amongst you. Turn unto God and seek His protection, O concourse of divines, and make not of yourselves a veil between Me and My creatures. Thus doth your Lord admonish you, and command you to be just, lest your works should come to naught and ye yourselves be oblivious of your plight. Shall he who denieth this Cause be able to vindicate the truth of any cause throughout creation? Nay, by Him Who is the Fashioner of the universe! Yet the people are wrapped in a palpable veil. Say: Through this Cause the day-star of testimony hath dawned, and the luminary of proof hath shed its radiance upon all that dwell on earth. Fear God, O men of insight, and be not of those who disbelieve in Me. Take heed lest the word "Prophet" withhold you from this Most Great Announcement, or any reference to "Vicegerency" debar you from the sovereignty of Him Who is the Vicegerent of God, which overshadoweth all the worlds. Every name hath been created by His Word, and every cause is dependent on His irresistible, His mighty and wondrous Cause. Say: This is the Day of God, the Day on which naught shall be mentioned save His own Self, the omnipotent Protector of all worlds. This is the Cause that hath made all your superstitions and idols to tremble.

168 We, verily, see amongst you him who taketh hold [pg 81]of the Book of God and citeth from it proofs and arguments wherewith to repudiate his Lord, even as the followers of every other Faith sought reasons in their Holy Books for refuting Him Who is the Help in Peril, the Self-Subsisting. Say: God, the True One, is My witness that neither the Scriptures of the world, nor all the books

and writings in existence, shall, in this Day, avail you aught without this, the Living Book, Who proclaimeth in the midmost heart of creation: "Verily, there is none other God but Me, the All-Knowing, the All-Wise."

169 O concourse of divines! Beware lest ye be the cause of strife in the land, even as ye were the cause of the repudiation of the Faith in its early days. Gather the people around this Word that hath made the pebbles to cry out: "The Kingdom is God's, the Dawning-place of all signs!" Thus doth your Lord admonish you, as a bounty on His part; He, of a truth, is the Ever-Forgiving, the Most Generous.

170 Call ye to mind Karím, and how, when We summoned him unto God, he waxed disdainful, prompted by his own desires; yet We had sent him that which was a solace to the eye of proof in the world of being and the fulfilment of God's testimony to all the denizens of earth and heaven. As a token of the grace of Him Who is the All-Possessing, the Most High, We bade him embrace the Truth. But he turned away until, as an act of justice from God, angels of wrath laid hold upon him. Unto this We truly were a witness.

171 Tear the veils asunder in such wise that the inmates of the Kingdom will hear them being rent. [pg 82]This is the command of God, in days gone by and for those to come. Blessed the man that observeth that whereunto he was bidden, and woe betide the negligent.

172 We, of a certainty, have had no purpose in this earthly realm save to make God manifest and to reveal His sovereignty; sufficient unto Me is God for a witness. We, of a certainty, have had no intent in the celestial Kingdom but to exalt His Cause and glorify His praise; sufficient unto Me is God for a protector. We, of a certainty, have had no desire in the Dominion on high except to extol God and what hath been sent down by Him; sufficient unto Me is God for a helper.

173 Happy are ye, O ye the learned ones in Bahá. By the Lord! Ye are the billows of the Most Mighty Ocean, the stars of the firmament of Glory, the standards of triumph waving betwixt earth and heaven. Ye are the manifestations of steadfastness amidst men and the daysprings of Divine Utterance to all that dwell on earth. Well is it with him that turneth unto you, and woe betide the froward. This day, it behoveth whoso hath quaffed the Mystic Wine of everlasting life from the Hands of the loving-kindness of the Lord his God, the Merciful, to pulsate even as the throbbing artery in the body of mankind, that through him may be quickened the world and every crumbling bone.

174 O people of the world! When the Mystic Dove will have winged its flight from its Sanctuary of Praise and sought its far-off goal, its hidden habitation, refer ye whatsoever ye understand not in the Book to Him Who hath branched from this mighty Stock.

[pg 83]
175 O Pen of the Most High! Move Thou upon the Tablet at the bidding of Thy Lord, the Creator of the Heavens, and tell of the time when He Who is the Dayspring of Divine Unity purposed to direct His steps towards the School of Transcendent Oneness; haply the pure in heart may gain thereby a glimpse, be it as small as a needle's eye, of the mysteries of Thy Lord, the Almighty, the Omniscient, that lie concealed behind the veils. Say: We, indeed, set foot within the School of inner meaning and explanation when all created things were unaware. We saw the words sent down by Him Who is the All-Merciful, and We accepted the verses of God, the Help in Peril, the Self-Subsisting, which He[11] presented unto Us, and hearkened unto that which He had solemnly affirmed in the Tablet. This we assuredly did behold. And We assented to His wish through Our behest, for truly We are potent to command.

176 O people of the Bayán! We, verily, set foot within the

School of God when ye lay slumbering; and We perused the Tablet while ye were fast asleep. By the one true God! We read the Tablet ere it was revealed, while ye were unaware, and We had perfect knowledge of the Book when ye were yet unborn. These words are to your measure, not to God's. To this testifieth that which is enshrined within His knowledge, if ye be of them that comprehend; and to this the tongue of the Almighty doth bear witness, if ye be of those who understand. I swear by God, were We to lift the veil, ye would be dumbfounded.

[pg 84]
177 Take heed that ye dispute not idly concerning the Almighty and His Cause, for lo! He hath appeared amongst you invested with a Revelation so great as to encompass all things, whether of the past or of the future. Were We to address Our theme by speaking in the language of the inmates of the Kingdom, We would say: "In truth, God created that School ere He created heaven and earth, and We entered it before the letters B and E were joined and knit together." Such is the language of Our servants in Our Kingdom; consider what the tongue of the dwellers of Our exalted Dominion would utter, for We have taught them Our knowledge and have revealed to them whatever had lain hidden in God's wisdom. Imagine then what the Tongue of Might and Grandeur would utter in His All-Glorious Abode!

178 This is not a Cause which may be made a plaything for your idle fancies, nor is it a field for the foolish and faint of heart. By God, this is the arena of insight and detachment, of vision and upliftment, where none may spur on their chargers save the valiant horsemen of the Merciful, who have severed all attachment to the world of being. These, truly, are they that render God victorious on earth, and are the dawning-places of His sovereign might amidst mankind.

179 Beware lest aught that hath been revealed in the Bayán should keep you from your Lord, the Most

Compassionate. God is My witness that the Bayán was sent down for no other purpose than to celebrate My praise, did ye but know! In it the pure in heart will find [pg 85]only the fragrance of My love, only My Name that overshadoweth all that seeth and is seen. Say: Turn ye, O people, unto that which hath proceeded from My Most Exalted Pen. Should ye inhale therefrom the fragrance of God, set not yourselves against Him, nor deny yourselves a portion of His gracious favour and His manifold bestowals. Thus doth your Lord admonish you; He, verily, is the Counsellor, the Omniscient.

180 Whatsoever ye understand not in the Bayán, ask it of God, your Lord and the Lord of your forefathers. Should He so desire, He will expound for you that which is revealed therein, and disclose to you the pearls of Divine knowledge and wisdom that lie concealed within the ocean of its words. He, verily, is supreme over all names; no God is there but Him, the Help in Peril, the Self-Subsisting.

181 The world's equilibrium hath been upset through the vibrating influence of this most great, this new World Order. Mankind's ordered life hath been revolutionized through the agency of this unique, this wondrous System —the like of which mortal eyes have never witnessed.

182 Immerse yourselves in the ocean of My words, that ye may unravel its secrets, and discover all the pearls of wisdom that lie hid in its depths. Take heed that ye do not vacillate in your determination to embrace the truth of this Cause—a Cause through which the potentialities of the might of God have been revealed, and His sovereignty established. With faces beaming with joy, hasten ye unto Him. This is the changeless Faith of God, eternal in the past, eternal in the future. [pg 86]Let him that seeketh, attain it; and as to him that hath refused to seek it—verily, God is Self-Sufficient, above any need of His creatures.

183 Say: This is the infallible Balance which the Hand of

God is holding, in which all who are in the heavens and all who are on the earth are weighed, and their fate determined, if ye be of them that believe and recognize this truth. Say: This is the Most Great Testimony, by which the validity of every proof throughout the ages hath been established, would that ye might be assured thereof. Say: Through it the poor have been enriched, the learned enlightened, and the seekers enabled to ascend unto the presence of God. Beware lest ye make it a cause of dissension amongst you. Be ye as firmly settled as the immovable mountain in the Cause of your Lord, the Mighty, the Loving.

184 Say: O source of perversion! Abandon thy wilful blindness, and speak forth the truth amidst the people. I swear by God that I have wept for thee to see thee following thy selfish passions and renouncing Him Who fashioned thee and brought thee into being. Call to mind the tender mercy of thy Lord, and remember how We nurtured thee by day and by night for service to the Cause. Fear God, and be thou of the truly repentant. Granted that the people were confused about thy station, is it conceivable that thou thyself art similarly confused? Tremble before thy Lord and recall the days when thou didst stand before Our throne, and didst write down the verses that We dictated unto thee—verses sent down by God, the Omnipotent Protector, the Lord of might and power. Beware lest [pg 87]the fire of thy presumptuousness debar thee from attaining to God's Holy Court. Turn unto Him, and fear not because of thy deeds. He, in truth, forgiveth whomsoever He desireth as a bounty on His part; no God is there but Him, the Ever-Forgiving, the All-Bounteous. We admonish thee solely for the sake of God. Shouldst thou accept this counsel, thou wilt have acted to thine own behoof; and shouldst thou reject it, thy Lord, verily, can well dispense with thee, and with all those who, in manifest delusion, have followed thee. Behold! God hath laid hold on him who led thee astray. Return unto God, humble, submissive and lowly; verily, He will put away from thee thy sins, for thy

Lord, of a certainty, is the Forgiving, the Mighty, the All-Merciful.

185 This is the Counsel of God; would that thou mightest heed it! This is the Bounty of God; would that thou mightest receive it! This is the Utterance of God; if only thou wouldst apprehend it! This is the Treasure of God; if only thou couldst understand!

186 This is a Book which hath become the Lamp of the Eternal unto the world, and His straight, undeviating Path amidst the peoples of the earth. Say: This is the Dayspring of Divine knowledge, if ye be of them that understand, and the Dawning-place of God's commandments, if ye be of those who comprehend.

187 Burden not an animal with more than it can bear. We, truly, have prohibited such treatment through a most binding interdiction in the Book. Be ye the embodiments of justice and fairness amidst all creation.

188 Should anyone unintentionally take another's life, [pg 88]it is incumbent upon him to render to the family of the deceased an indemnity of one hundred mi̲th̲qáls of gold. Observe ye that which hath been enjoined upon you in this Tablet, and be not of those who overstep its limits.

189 O members of parliaments throughout the world! Select ye a single language for the use of all on earth, and adopt ye likewise a common script. God, verily, maketh plain for you that which shall profit you and enable you to be independent of others. He, of a truth, is the Most Bountiful, the All-Knowing, the All-Informed. This will be the cause of unity, could ye but comprehend it, and the greatest instrument for promoting harmony and civilization, would that ye might understand! We have appointed two signs for the coming of age of the human race: the first, which is the most firm foundation, We have set down in other of Our Tablets, while the second hath been revealed in this wondrous Book.

190 It hath been forbidden you to smoke opium. We, truly, have prohibited this practice through a most binding interdiction in the Book. Should anyone partake thereof, assuredly he is not of Me. Fear God, O ye endued with understanding!

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Some Texts Revealed By Bahá'u'lláh Supplementary To The Kitáb-i-Aqdas

"A number of Tablets revealed by Bahá'u'lláh after the..."

A number of Tablets revealed by Bahá'u'lláh after the Kitáb-i-Aqdas contain passages supplementary to the provisions of the Most Holy Book. The most noteworthy of these have been published in Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh revealed after the Kitáb-i-Aqdas. Included in this section is an extract from the Tablet of Ish̲ráqát. The text of the three Obligatory Prayers referred to in Questions and Answers and the Prayer for the Dead mentioned in the Text are, likewise, reprinted here.

The Tablet of Is̲h̲r̲áqát

The Eighth Ishráq

This passage, now written by the Pen of Glory, is accounted as part of the Most Holy Book: The men of God's House of Justice have been charged with the affairs of the people. They, in truth, are the Trustees of God among His servants and the daysprings of authority in His countries.

O people of God! That which traineth the world is Justice, for it is upheld by two pillars, reward and punishment. These two pillars are the sources of life to the world. Inasmuch as for each day there is a new problem and for every problem an expedient solution, such affairs should be referred to the House of Justice that the members thereof may act according to the needs and requirements of the time. They that, for the sake of God, arise to serve His Cause, are the recipients of divine inspiration from the unseen Kingdom. It is incumbent upon all to be obedient unto them. All matters of State should be referred to the House of Justice, but acts of worship must be observed according to that which God hath revealed in His Book.

O people of Bahá! Ye are the dawning-places of the love of God and the daysprings of His loving-kindness. Defile not your tongues with the cursing and reviling of any soul, and guard your eyes against that which is not seemly. Set forth that which ye possess. If it be favourably received, your end is attained; if not, to [pg 92]protest is vain. Leave that soul to himself and turn unto the Lord, the Protector, the Self-Subsisting. Be not the cause of grief, much less of discord and strife. The hope is cherished that ye may obtain true education in the shelter of the tree of His tender mercies and act in accordance with that which God desireth. Ye are all the leaves of one tree and the drops of one ocean.

(Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh revealed after the Kitáb-i-Aqdas)

Long Obligatory Prayer

To Be Recited Once In Twenty-four Hours

Whoso wisheth to recite this prayer, let him stand up and turn unto God, and, as he standeth in his place, let him gaze to the right and to the left, as if awaiting the mercy of his Lord, the Most Merciful, the Compassionate. Then let him say:

O Thou Who art the Lord of all names and the Maker of the heavens! I beseech Thee by them Who are the Daysprings of Thine invisible Essence, the Most Exalted, the All-Glorious, to make of my prayer a fire that will burn away the veils which have shut me out from Thy beauty, and a light that will lead me unto the ocean of Thy Presence.

Let him then raise his hands in supplication toward God—blessed and exalted be He—and say:

O Thou the Desire of the world and the Beloved of [pg 93]the nations! Thou seest me turning toward Thee, and rid of all attachment to anyone save Thee, and clinging to Thy cord, through whose movement the whole creation hath been stirred up. I am Thy servant, O my Lord, and the son of Thy servant. Behold me standing ready to do Thy will and Thy desire, and wishing naught else except Thy good pleasure. I implore Thee by the Ocean of Thy mercy and the Day-Star of Thy grace to do with Thy servant as Thou willest and pleasest. By Thy might which is far above all mention and praise! Whatsoever is revealed by Thee is the desire of my heart and the beloved of my soul. O God, my God! Look not upon my hopes and my doings, nay rather look upon Thy will that hath encompassed the heavens and the earth. By Thy Most Great Name, O Thou Lord of all nations! I have desired only what Thou didst desire, and love only what Thou dost love.

Let him then kneel, and bowing his forehead to the ground, let him say:

Exalted art Thou above the description of anyone save Thyself, and the comprehension of aught else except Thee.

Let him then stand and say:

Make my prayer, O my Lord, a fountain of living waters whereby I may live as long as Thy sovereignty endureth, and may make mention of Thee in every world of Thy worlds.

Let him again raise his hands in supplication, and say:

O Thou in separation from Whom hearts and souls [pg 94]have melted, and by the fire of Whose love the whole world hath been set aflame! I implore Thee by Thy Name through which Thou hast subdued the whole creation, not to withhold from me that which is with Thee, O Thou Who rulest over all men! Thou seest, O my Lord, this stranger hastening to his most exalted home beneath the canopy of Thy majesty and within the precincts of Thy mercy; and this transgressor seeking the ocean of Thy forgiveness; and this lowly one the court of Thy glory; and this poor creature the orient of Thy wealth. Thine is the authority to command whatsoever Thou willest. I bear witness that Thou art to be praised in Thy doings, and to be obeyed in Thy behests, and to remain unconstrained in Thy bidding.

Let him then raise his hands, and repeat three times the Greatest Name. Let him then bend down with hands resting on the knees before God—blessed and exalted be He—and say:

Thou seest, O my God, how my spirit hath been stirred up within my limbs and members, in its longing to worship Thee, and in its yearning to remember Thee and extol Thee; how it testifieth to that whereunto the Tongue of Thy Commandment hath testified in the kingdom of Thine utterance and the heaven of Thy knowledge. I love, in this state, O my Lord, to beg of Thee all that is with Thee, that I may demonstrate my poverty, and magnify Thy bounty and Thy riches, and may declare my powerlessness, and manifest Thy power and Thy might.

[pg 95]

Let him then stand and raise his hands twice in supplication, and say:

There is no God but Thee, the Almighty, the All-Bountiful. There is no God but Thee, the Ordainer, both in the beginning and in the end. O God, my God! Thy forgiveness hath emboldened me, and Thy mercy hath strengthened me, and Thy call hath awakened me, and Thy grace hath raised me up and led me unto Thee. Who, otherwise, am I that I should dare to stand at the gate of the city of Thy nearness, or set my face toward the lights that are shining from the heaven of Thy will? Thou seest, O my Lord, this wretched creature knocking at the door of Thy grace, and this evanescent soul seeking the river of everlasting life from the hands of Thy bounty. Thine is the command at all times, O Thou Who art the Lord of all names; and mine is resignation and willing submission to Thy will, O Creator of the heavens!

Let him then raise his hands thrice, and say:

Greater is God than every great one!

Let him then kneel and, bowing his forehead to the ground, say:

Too high art Thou for the praise of those who are nigh unto Thee to ascend unto the heaven of Thy nearness, or for the birds of the hearts of them who are devoted to Thee to attain to the door of Thy gate. I testify that Thou hast been sanctified above all attributes and holy above all names. No God is there but Thee, the Most Exalted, the All-Glorious.

[pg 96]

Let him then seat himself and say:

I testify unto that whereunto have testified all created things, and the Concourse on high, and the inmates of the all-highest Paradise, and beyond them the Tongue of Grandeur itself from the all-glorious Horizon, that Thou art God, that there is no God but Thee, and that He Who hath been manifested is the Hidden Mystery, the Treasured Symbol, through Whom the letters B and E (Be) have been joined and knit together. I testify that it is He whose name hath been set down by the Pen of the Most High, and Who hath been mentioned in the Books of God, the Lord of the Throne on high and of earth below.

Let him then stand erect and say:

O Lord of all being and Possessor of all things visible and invisible! Thou dost perceive my tears and the sighs I utter, and hearest my groaning, and my wailing, and the lamentation of my heart. By Thy might! My trespasses have kept me back from drawing nigh unto Thee; and my sins have held me far from the court of Thy holiness. Thy love, O my Lord, hath enriched me, and separation from Thee hath destroyed me, and remoteness from Thee hath consumed me. I entreat Thee by Thy footsteps in this wilderness, and by the words "Here am I. Here am I" which Thy chosen Ones have uttered in this immensity, and by the breaths of Thy Revelation, and the gentle

winds of the Dawn of Thy Manifestation, to ordain that I may gaze on Thy beauty and observe whatsoever is in Thy Book.

[pg 97]

Let him then repeat the Greatest Name thrice, and bend down with hands resting on the knees, and say:

Praise be to Thee, O my God, that Thou hast aided me to remember Thee and to praise Thee, and hast made known unto me Him Who is the Dayspring of Thy signs, and hast caused me to bow down before Thy Lordship, and humble myself before Thy Godhead, and to acknowledge that which hath been uttered by the Tongue of Thy grandeur.

Let him then rise and say:

O God, my God! My back is bowed by the burden of my sins, and my heedlessness hath destroyed me. Whenever I ponder my evil doings and Thy benevolence, my heart melteth within me, and my blood boileth in my veins. By Thy Beauty, O Thou the Desire of the world! I blush to lift up my face to Thee, and my longing hands are ashamed to stretch forth toward the heaven of Thy bounty. Thou seest, O my God, how my tears prevent me from remembering Thee and from extolling Thy virtues, O Thou the Lord of the Throne on high and of earth below! I implore Thee by the signs of Thy Kingdom and the mysteries of Thy Dominion to do with Thy loved ones as becometh Thy bounty, O Lord of all being, and is worthy of Thy grace, O King of the seen and the unseen!

Let him then repeat the Greatest Name thrice, and kneel with his forehead to the ground, and say:

Praise be unto Thee, O our God, that Thou hast [pg 98]sent down unto us that which draweth us nigh unto Thee, and supplieth us with every good thing sent down by Thee in Thy Books and Thy Scriptures. Protect us, we beseech Thee, O my Lord, from the hosts of idle fancies and vain imaginations. Thou, in truth, art the Mighty, the All-Knowing.

Let him then raise his head, and seat himself, and say:

I testify, O my God, to that whereunto Thy chosen Ones have testified, and acknowledge that which the inmates of the all-highest Paradise and those who have circled round Thy mighty Throne have acknowledged. The kingdoms of earth and heaven are Thine, O Lord of the worlds!

(Prayers and Meditations by Bahá'u'lláh, CLXXXIII)

Medium Obligatory Prayer

To Be Recited Daily, In The Morning, At Noon, And In The Evening

Whoso wisheth to pray, let him wash his hands, and while he washeth, let him say:

Strengthen my hand, O my God, that it may take hold of Thy Book with such steadfastness that the hosts of the world shall have no power over it. Guard it, then, from meddling with whatsoever doth not belong unto it. Thou art, verily, the Almighty, the Most Powerful.

And while washing his face, let him say:

[pg 99]
I have turned my face unto Thee, O my Lord! Illumine it with the light of Thy countenance. Protect it, then, from turning to any one but Thee.

Then let him stand up, and facing the Qiblih (Point of Adoration, i.e. Bahjí, Akká), let him say:

God testifieth that there is none other God but Him. His are the kingdoms of Revelation and of creation. He, in truth, hath manifested Him Who is the Dayspring of Revelation, Who conversed on Sinai, through Whom the Supreme Horizon hath been made to shine, and the Lote-Tree beyond which there is no passing hath spoken, and through Whom the call hath been proclaimed unto all who are in heaven and on earth: "Lo, the All-Possessing is come. Earth and heaven, glory and dominion are God's, the Lord of all men, and the Possessor of the Throne on high and of earth below!"

Let him, then, bend down, with hands resting on

the knees, and say:

Exalted art Thou above my praise and the praise of anyone beside me, above my description and the description of all who are in heaven and all who are on earth!

Then, standing with open hands, palms upward toward the face, let him say:

Disappoint not, O my God, him that hath, with beseeching fingers, clung to the hem of Thy mercy and Thy grace, O Thou Who of those who show mercy art the Most Merciful!

[pg 100]

Let him, then, be seated and say:

I bear witness to Thy unity and Thy oneness, and that Thou art God, and that there is none other God beside Thee. Thou hast, verily, revealed Thy Cause, fulfilled Thy Covenant, and opened wide the door of Thy grace to all that dwell in heaven and on earth. Blessing and peace, salutation and glory, rest upon Thy loved ones, whom the changes and chances of the world have not deterred from turning unto Thee, and who have given their all, in the hope of obtaining that which is with Thee. Thou art, in truth, the Ever-Forgiving, the All-Bountiful.

(If anyone choose to recite instead of the long verse these words: "God testifieth that there is none other God but Him, the Help in Peril, the Self-Subsisting," it would be sufficient. And likewise, it would suffice were he, while seated, to choose to recite these words: "I bear witness to Thy unity and Thy oneness, and that Thou art God, and that there is none other God beside

Thee.")

(Prayers and Meditations by Bahá'u'lláh, CLXXXII)

Short Obligatory Prayer

To Be Recited Once In Twenty-four Hours, At Noon

I bear witness, O my God, that Thou hast created me to know Thee and to worship Thee. I testify, at this [pg 101]moment, to my powerlessness and to Thy might, to my poverty and to Thy wealth.

There is none other God but Thee, the Help in Peril, the Self-Subsisting.

(Prayers and Meditations by Bahá'u'lláh, CLXXXI)

Prayer For The Dead

O my God! This is Thy servant and the son of Thy servant who hath believed in Thee and in Thy signs, and set his face towards Thee, wholly detached from all except Thee. Thou art, verily, of those who show mercy the most merciful.

Deal with him, O Thou Who forgivest the sins of men and concealest their faults, as beseemeth the heaven of Thy bounty and the ocean of Thy grace. Grant him admission within the precincts of Thy transcendent mercy that was before the foundation of earth and heaven. There is no God but Thee, the Ever-Forgiving, the Most Generous.

Let him, then, repeat six times the greeting "Alláh-u-Abhá", and then repeat nineteen times each of the following verses:

We all, verily, worship God.

We all, verily, bow down before God.

We all, verily, are devoted unto God.

We all, verily, give praise unto God.

We all, verily, yield thanks unto God.

We all, verily, are patient in God.

(If the dead be a woman, let him say: This is Thy handmaiden and the daughter of Thy handmaiden, etc...)

(Prayers and Meditations by Bahá'u'lláh, CLXVII)

[pg 105]

Questions And Answers

1. QUESTION: Concerning the Most Great Festival.

ANSWER: The Most Great Festival commenceth late in the afternoon of the thirteenth day of the second month of the year according to the Bayán. On the first, ninth and twelfth days of this Festival, work is forbidden.

2. QUESTION: Concerning the Festival of the Twin Birthdays.

ANSWER: The Birth of the Abhá Beauty[12] was at the hour of dawn on the second day of the month of Muharram,[13] the first day of which marketh the Birth of His Herald. These two days are accounted as one in the sight of God.

3. QUESTION: Concerning the Marriage Verses.[14]

ANSWER: For men: "We will all, verily, abide by the Will of God." For women: "We will all, verily, abide by the Will of God."

4. QUESTION: Should a man go on a journey without specifying a time for his return—without indicating, in other words, the expected period of his absence—and should no word be heard of him thereafter, and all trace [pg 106]of him be lost, what course should be followed by his wife?

ANSWER: Should he have omitted to fix a time for his return despite being aware of the stipulation of the Kitáb-i-Aqdas in this regard, his wife should wait for one full year, after which she shall be free either to adopt the course that is praiseworthy, or to choose for herself another husband. If, however, he be unaware of this stipulation, she should abide in patience until such time

as God shall please to disclose to her his fate. By the course that is praiseworthy in this connection is meant the exercise of patience.

5. QUESTION: Concerning the holy verse: "When We heard the clamour of the children as yet unborn, We doubled their share and decreased those of the rest."

ANSWER: According to the Book of God, the estate of the deceased is divided into 2,520 shares, which number is the lowest common multiple of all integers up to nine, and these shares are then distributed into seven portions, each of which is allocated, as mentioned in the Book, to a particular category of heirs. The children, for example, are allotted nine blocks of 60 shares, comprising 540 shares in all. The meaning of the statement "We doubled their share" is thus that the children receive a further nine blocks of 60 shares, entitling them to a total of 18 blocks all told. The extra shares that they receive are deducted from the portions of the other categories [pg 107]of heirs, so that, although it is revealed, for instance, that the spouse is entitled to "eight parts comprising four hundred and eighty shares", which is the equivalent of eight blocks of 60 shares, now, by virtue of this rearrangement, one and a half blocks of shares, comprising 90 shares in all, have been subtracted from the spouse’s portion and reallocated to the children, and similarly in the case of the others. The result is that the total amount subtracted is equivalent to the nine extra blocks of shares allotted to the children.

6. QUESTION: Is it necessary that the brother, in order to qualify for his portion of the inheritance, be descended from both the father and the mother of the deceased, or is it sufficient merely that there be one parent in common?

ANSWER: If the brother be descended from the father he shall receive his share of the inheritance in the prescribed measure recorded in the Book; but if he be descended from the mother, he shall receive only two thirds of his entitlement, the remaining third reverting to the House of

Justice. This ruling is also applicable to the sister.

7. QUESTION: Amongst the provisions concerning inheritance it hath been laid down that, should the deceased leave no offspring, their share of the estate is to revert to the House of Justice. In the event of other categories of heirs, such as the father, mother, brother, sister and teacher being similarly absent, do their shares of the inheritance also revert to the House of Justice, or are they dealt with in some other fashion?

[pg 108]
ANSWER: The sacred verse sufficeth. He saith, exalted be His Word: "Should the deceased leave no offspring, their share shall revert to the House of Justice" etc. and "Should the deceased leave offspring, but none of the other categories of heirs that have been specified in the Book, they shall receive two thirds of the inheritance and the remaining third shall revert to the House of Justice" etc. In other words, where there are no offspring, their allotted portion of the inheritance reverteth to the House of Justice; and where there are offspring but the other categories of heirs are lacking, two thirds of the inheritance pass to the offspring, the remaining third reverting to the House of Justice. This ruling hath both general and specific application, which is to say that whenever any category of this latter class of heirs is absent, two thirds of their inheritance pass to the offspring and the remaining third to the House of Justice.

8. QUESTION: Concerning the basic sum on which Ḥuqúqu'lláh is payable.

ANSWER: The basic sum on which Ḥuqúqu'lláh is payable is nineteen mit̲h̲qáls of gold. In other words, when money to the value of this sum hath been acquired, a payment of Ḥuqúq falleth due. Likewise Ḥuqúq is payable when the value, not the number, of other forms of property reacheth the prescribed amount. Ḥuqúqu'lláh is payable no more than once. A person, for instance, who [pg 109]acquireth a thousand mit̲h̲qáls of gold, and

payeth the Ḥuqúq, is not liable to make a further such payment on this sum, but only on what accrueth to it through commerce, business and the like. When this increase, namely the profit realized, reacheth the prescribed sum, one must carry out what God hath decreed. Only when the principal changeth hands is it once more subject to payment of Ḥuqúq, as it was the first time. The Primal Point hath directed that Ḥuqúqu'lláh must be paid on the value of whatsoever one possesseth; yet, in this Most Mighty Dispensation, We have exempted the household furnishings, that is such furnishings as are needed, and the residence itself.

9. QUESTION: Which is to take precedence: the Ḥuqúqu'lláh, the debts of the deceased or the cost of the funeral and burial?

ANSWER: The funeral and burial take precedence, then settlement of debts, then payment of Ḥuqúqu'lláh. Should the property of the deceased prove insufficient to cover his debts, the remainder of his estate should be distributed among these debts in proportion to their size.

10. QUESTION: Shaving the head hath been forbidden in the Kitáb-i-Aqdas but enjoined in the Súriy-i-Hájj.

ANSWER: All are charged with obedience to the Kitáb-i-Aqdas; whatsoever is revealed therein is the Law of God amid His servants. The injunction on pilgrims to the sacred House to shave the head hath been lifted.

[pg 110]
11. QUESTION: If intercourse take place between a couple during their year of patience, and they become estranged again thereafter, must they recommence their year of patience, or may the days preceding the intercourse be included in the reckoning of the year? And once divorce hath taken place, is it necessary that a further period of waiting be observed?

ANSWER: Should affection be renewed between the

couple during their year of patience, the marriage tie is valid, and what is commanded in the Book of God must be observed; but once the year of patience hath been completed and that which is decreed by God taketh place, a further period of waiting is not required. Sexual intercourse between husband and wife is forbidden during their year of patience, and whoso committeth this act must seek God's forgiveness, and, as a punishment, render to the House of Justice a fine of nineteen mi<u>th</u><u>q</u>áls of gold.

12. QUESTION: Should antipathy develop between a couple after the Marriage Verses have been read and the dowry paid, may divorce take place without observance of the year of patience?

ANSWER: Divorce may legitimately be sought after the reading of the Marriage Verses and payment of the dowry, but before the consummation of the marriage. In such circumstances there is no need for observance of a year of patience, but recovery of the dowry payment is not permissible.

13. QUESTION: Is the consent of the parents on both sides [pg 111]prerequisite to marriage, or is that of the parents on one side sufficient? Is this law applicable only to virgins or to others as well?

ANSWER: Marriage is conditional upon the consent of the parents of both parties to the marriage, and in this respect it maketh no difference whether the bride be a virgin or otherwise.

14. QUESTION: The believers have been enjoined to face in the direction of the Qiblih when reciting their Obligatory Prayers; in what direction should they turn when offering other prayers and devotions?

ANSWER: Facing in the direction of the Qiblih is a fixed requirement for the recitation of obligatory prayer, but for other prayers and devotions one may follow what the

merciful Lord hath revealed in the Qur'án: "Whichever way ye turn, there is the face of God."

15. QUESTION: Concerning the remembrance of God in the Masḥ̱riqu'l-Adḥ̱kár "at the hour of dawn".

ANSWER: Although the words "at the hour of dawn" are used in the Book of God, it is acceptable to God at the earliest dawn of day, between dawn and sunrise, or even up to two hours after sunrise.

16. QUESTION: Is the ordinance that the body of the deceased should be carried no greater distance than one hour's journey applicable to transport by both land and sea?

ANSWER: This command applieth to distances [pg 112]by sea as well as by land, whether it is an hour by steamship or by rail; the intention is the hour's time, whatever the means of transport. The sooner the burial taketh place, however, the more fitting and acceptable will it be.

17. QUESTION: What procedure should be followed on the discovery of lost property?

ANSWER: If such property be found in the town, its discovery is to be announced once by the town crier. If the owner of the property is then found, it should be delivered up to him. Otherwise, the finder of the property should wait one year, and if, during this period, the owner cometh to light, the finder should receive from him the crier's fee and restore to him his property; only if the year should pass without the owner's being identified may the finder take possession of the property himself. If the value of the property is less than or equal to the crier's fee, the finder should wait a single day from the time of its discovery, at the end of which, if the owner hath not come to light, he may himself appropriate it; and in the case of property discovered in an uninhabited area, the finder should observe a three days' wait, on the passing of which period, if the identity of the owner

remain unknown, he is free to take possession of his find.

18. QUESTION: With reference to the ablutions: if, for example, a person hath just bathed his entire body, must he still perform his ablutions?

[pg 113]
ANSWER: The commandment regarding ablutions must, in any case, be observed.

19. QUESTION: Should a person plan to migrate from his country, and his wife be opposed and the disagreement culminate in divorce, and should his preparations for the journey extend until a year hath passed, may this period be counted as the year of patience, or should the day the couple part be regarded as the starting-point of that year?

ANSWER: The starting-point for computation is the day the couple part, and if, therefore, they have separated a year before the husband's departure, and if the fragrance of affection hath not been renewed between the couple, divorce may take place. Otherwise the year must be counted from the day of his departure, and the conditions set forth in the Kitáb-i-Aqdas observed.

20. QUESTION: Concerning the age of maturity with respect to religious duties.

ANSWER: The age of maturity is fifteen for both men and women.

21. QUESTION: Concerning the holy verse: "When travelling, if ye should stop and rest in some safe spot, perform ye ... a single prostration in place of each unsaid Obligatory Prayer..."

ANSWER: This prostration is to compensate for obligatory prayer omitted in the course of travel, and by reason of insecure circumstances. If, [pg 114]at the time of prayer, the traveller should find himself at rest in a secure place, he should perform that prayer. This provision regarding

the compensating prostration applieth both at home and on a journey.

22. QUESTION: Concerning the definition of a journey.[15]

ANSWER: The definition of a journey is nine hours by the clock. Should the traveller stop in a place, anticipating that he will stay there for no less than one month by the Bayán reckoning, it is incumbent on him to keep the Fast; but if for less than one month, he is exempt from fasting. If he arriveth during the Fast at a place where he is to stay one month according to the Bayán, he should not observe the Fast till three days have elapsed, thereafter keeping it throughout the remainder of its course; but if he come to his home, where he hath heretofore been permanently resident, he must commence his fast upon the first day after his arrival.

23. QUESTION: Concerning the punishment of the adulterer and adulteress.

Nine Mit̲h̲qáls are payable for the first offence, eighteen for the second, thirty-six for the third, and so on, each succeeding fine being double the preceding. The weight of one mit̲h̲qál [pg 115]is equivalent to nineteen nák̲h̲uds in accordance with the specification of the Bayán.

24. QUESTION: Concerning hunting.

ANSWER: He saith, exalted be He: "If ye should hunt with beasts or birds of prey" and so forth. Other means, such as bows and arrows, guns, and similar equipment employed in hunting, are also included. If, however, traps or snares are used, and the game dieth before it can be reached, it is unlawful for consumption.

25. QUESTION: Concerning the pilgrimage.

ANSWER: It is an obligation to make pilgrimage to one of the two sacred Houses; but as to which, it is for the pilgrim to decide.

26. QUESTION: Concerning the dowry.

ANSWER: Regarding dowry, the intention of contenting oneself with the lowest level is nineteen mithqáls of silver.

27. QUESTION: Concerning the sacred verse: "If, however, news should reach her of her husband's death", etc.

ANSWER: With reference to waiting a "fixed number of months" a period of nine months is intended.

28. QUESTION: Again inquiry hath been made about the teacher's share of the inheritance.

ANSWER: Should the teacher have passed away, one third of his share of the inheritance reverteth to the House of Justice, and the remaining two thirds pass to the deceased's, and not the teacher's, offspring.

29. QUESTION: Again inquiry hath been made about the pilgrimage.

ANSWER: By pilgrimage to the sacred House, which is enjoined upon men, is intended both the Most Great House in Baghdád and the House of the Primal Point in Shíráz; pilgrimage to either of these Houses sufficeth. They may thus make pilgrimage to whichever lieth nearer to the place where they reside.

30. QUESTION: Concerning the verse: "he who would take into his service a maid may do so with propriety."

ANSWER: This is solely for service such as is performed by any other class of servants, be they young or old, in exchange for wages; such a maiden is free to choose a husband at whatever time she pleaseth, for it is forbidden either that women should be purchased, or that a man should have more wives than two.

31. QUESTION: Concerning the sacred verse: "The Lord hath prohibited ... the practice to which ye formerly had

recourse when thrice ye had divorced a woman."

ANSWER: The reference is to the law which previously made it necessary for another man to marry such a woman before she could again be wedded to her former husband; this practice hath been prohibited in the Kitáb-i-Aqdas.

[pg 117]
32. QUESTION: Concerning the restoration and preservation of the two Houses in the Twin Spots, and the other sites wherein the throne hath been established.

ANSWER: By the two Houses is intended the Most Great House and the House of the Primal Point. As for other sites, the people of the areas where these are situated may choose to preserve either each house wherein the throne hath been established, or one of them.

33. QUESTION: Again inquiry hath been made about the inheritance of the teacher.

ANSWER: If the teacher is not of the people of Bahá, he doth not inherit. Should there be several teachers, the share is to be divided equally amongst them. If the teacher is deceased, his offspring do not inherit his share, but rather two thirds of it revert to the children of the owner of the estate, and the remaining one third to the House of Justice.

34. QUESTION: Concerning the residence which hath been assigned exclusively to the male offspring.

ANSWER: If there are several residences, the finest and noblest of these dwellings is the one intended, the remainder being distributed amongst the whole body of the heirs like any other form of property. Any heir, from whichever category of inheritors, who is outside the Faith of God is accounted as non-existent and doth not inherit.

[pg 118]

35. QUESTION: Concerning Naw-Rúz.

ANSWER: The Festival of Naw-Rúz falleth on the day that the sun entereth the sign of Aries,[16] even should this occur no more than one minute before sunset.

36. QUESTION: If the anniversary either of the Twin Birthdays or of the Declaration of the Báb occurreth during the Fast, what is to be done?

ANSWER: Should the feasts celebrating the Twin Birthdays or the Declaration of the Báb fall within the month of fasting, the command to fast shall not apply on that day.

37. QUESTION: In the holy ordinances governing inheritance, the residence and personal clothing of the deceased have been allotted to the male offspring. Doth this provision refer only to the father's property, or doth it apply to the mother's as well?

ANSWER: The used clothing of the mother should be divided in equal shares among the daughters, but the remainder of her estate, including property, jewellery, and unused clothing, is to be distributed, in the manner revealed in the Kitáb-i-Aqdas, to all her heirs. If, however, the deceased hath left no daughters, her estate in its entirety must be divided in the manner designated for men in the holy Text.

38. QUESTION: Concerning divorce, which must be preceded [pg 119]by a year of patience: if only one of the parties is inclined toward conciliation, what is to be done?

ANSWER: According to the commandment revealed in the Kitáb-i-Aqdas, both parties must be content; unless both are willing, reunion cannot take place.

39. QUESTION: In connection with the dowry, what if the bridegroom cannot pay this sum in full, but instead were

to formally deliver a promissory note to his bride at the time of the wedding ceremony, on the understanding that he will honour it when he is able to do so?

ANSWER: Permission to adopt this practice hath been granted by the Source of Authority.

40. QUESTION: If during the year of patience the fragrance of affection be renewed, only to be succeeded by antipathy, and the couple waver between affection and aversion throughout the year, and the year endeth in antipathy, can divorce take place or not?

ANSWER: In each case at any time antipathy occurreth, the year of patience beginneth on that day, and the year must run its full course.

41. QUESTION: The residence and personal clothing of the deceased have been assigned to the male, not female, offspring, nor to the other heirs; should the deceased have left no male offspring, what is to be done?

ANSWER: He saith, exalted be He: "Should the deceased leave no offspring, their share shall revert to the House of Justice..." In conformity [pg 120]with this sacred verse, the residence and personal clothing of the deceased revert to the House of Justice.

42. QUESTION: The ordinance of Ḥuqúqu'lláh is revealed in the Kitáb-i-Aqdas. Is the residence, with the accompanying fixtures and necessary furnishings, included in the property on which Ḥuqúq is payable, or is it otherwise?

ANSWER: In the laws revealed in Persian We have ordained that in this Most Mighty Dispensation the residence and the household furnishings are exempt—that is, such furnishings as are necessary.

43. QUESTION: Concerning the betrothal of a girl before maturity.

ANSWER: This practice hath been pronounced unlawful by the Source of Authority, and it is unlawful to announce a marriage earlier than ninety-five days before the wedding.

44. QUESTION: If a person hath, for example, a hundred túmans, payeth the Ḥuqúq on this sum, loseth half the sum in unsuccessful transactions and then, through trading, the amount in hand is raised again to the sum on which Ḥuqúq is due—must such a person pay Ḥuqúq or not?

ANSWER: In such an event the Ḥuqúq is not payable.

45. QUESTION: If, after payment of Ḥuqúq, this same sum of one hundred túmans is lost in its entirety, but [pg 121]subsequently regained through trade and business dealings, must Ḥuqúq be paid a second time or not?

ANSWER: In this event as well, payment of Ḥuqúq is not required.

46. QUESTION: With reference to the sacred verse, "God hath prescribed matrimony unto you", is this prescription obligatory or not?

ANSWER: It is not obligatory.

47. QUESTION: Supposing that a man hath wed a certain woman believing her to be a virgin and he hath paid her the dowry, but at the time of consummation it becometh evident that she is not a virgin, are the expenses and the dowry to be repaid or not? And if the marriage had been made conditional upon virginity, doth the unfulfilled condition invalidate that which was conditioned upon it?

ANSWER: In such a case the expenses and the dowry may be refunded. The unfulfilled condition invalidateth that which is conditioned upon it. However, to conceal and forgive the matter will, in the sight of God, merit a bounteous reward.

48. QUESTION: "A feast hath been enjoined upon you..." Is this obligatory or not?

ANSWER: It is not obligatory.

49. QUESTION: Concerning the penalties for adultery, sodomy, and theft, and the degrees thereof.

ANSWER: The determination of the degrees of these penalties rests with the House of Justice.

[pg 122]
50. QUESTION: Concerning the legitimacy or otherwise of marrying one's relatives.

ANSWER: These matters likewise rest with the Trustees of the House of Justice.

51. QUESTION: With reference to ablutions, it hath been revealed, "Let him that findeth no water for ablution repeat five times the words 'In the Name of God, the Most Pure, the Most Pure'": is it permissible to recite this verse in times of bitter cold, or if the hands or face be wounded?

ANSWER: Warm water may be used in times of bitter cold. If there are wounds on the face or hands, or there be other reasons such as aches and pains for which the use of water would be harmful, one may recite the appointed verse in place of the ablution.

52. QUESTION: Is the recitation of the verse revealed to replace the Prayer of the Signs obligatory?

ANSWER: It is not obligatory.

53. QUESTION: With reference to inheritance, when there are full brothers and full sisters, would half-brothers and half-sisters on the mother's side also receive a share?

ANSWER: They receive no share.

54. QUESTION: He saith, exalted be He: "Should the son of the deceased have passed away in the days of his father and have left children, they will inherit their [pg 123]father's share..." What is to be done if the daughter hath died during the lifetime of her father?

ANSWER: Her share of the inheritance should be distributed among the seven categories of heirs according to the ordinance of the Book.

55. QUESTION: If the deceased be a woman, to whom is the "wife's" share of the inheritance allotted?

ANSWER: The "wife's" share of the inheritance is allotted to the husband.

56. QUESTION: Concerning the shrouding of the body of the deceased which is decreed to comprise five sheets: does the five refer to five cloths which were hitherto customarily used or to five full-length shrouds wrapped one around the other?

ANSWER: The use of five cloths is intended.

57. QUESTION: Concerning disparities between certain revealed verses.

ANSWER: Many Tablets were revealed and dispatched in their original form without being checked and reviewed. Consequently, as bidden, they were again read out in the Holy Presence, and brought into conformity with the grammatical conventions of the people in order to forestall the cavils of opponents of the Cause. Another reason for this practice is that the new style inaugurated by the Herald, may the souls of all else but Him be offered up for His sake, was seen to be marked by substantial latitude in adherence to the rules of [pg 124]grammar; sacred verses therefore were then revealed in a style which is for the most part in conformity with current usage for ease of understanding and concision of expression.

58. QUESTION: Concerning the blessed verse, "When travelling, if ye should stop and rest in some safe spot, perform ye ... a single prostration in place of each unsaid Obligatory Prayer": is this compensation for the Obligatory Prayer missed by reason of insecure circumstances, or is obligatory prayer completely suspended during travel, and doth the prostration take its place?

ANSWER: If, when the hour of obligatory prayer arriveth, there be no security, one should, upon arrival in safe surroundings, perform a prostration in place of each Obligatory Prayer that was missed, and after the final prostration, sit cross-legged and read the designated verse. If there be a safe place, obligatory prayer is not suspended during travel.

59. QUESTION: If, after a traveller hath stopped and rested it is the time for obligatory prayer, should he perform the prayer, or make the prostration in its stead?

ANSWER: Except in insecure circumstances omission of the Obligatory Prayer is not permissible.

60. QUESTION: If, due to missed Obligatory Prayers, a number of prostrations are required, must the verse be repeated after each compensating prostration or not?

ANSWER: It is sufficient to recite the designated verse after the last prostration. The several prostrations do not require separate repetitions of the verse.

[pg 125]
61. QUESTION: If an Obligatory Prayer be omitted at home, is it to be compensated for by a prostration or not?

ANSWER: In answer to previous questions it was written: "This provision regarding the compensating prostration applieth both at home and on a journey."

62. QUESTION: If, for another purpose, one hath

performed ablutions, and the time of obligatory prayer arriveth, are these ablutions sufficient or must they be renewed?

ANSWER: These same ablutions are sufficient, and there is no need for them to be renewed.

63. QUESTION: In the Kitáb-i-Aqdas obligatory prayer hath been enjoined, consisting of nine rak'áhs, to be performed at noon, in the morning and the evening, but the Tablet of Obligatory Prayers[17] appeareth to differ from this.

ANSWER: That which hath been revealed in the Kitáb-i-Aqdas concerneth a different Obligatory Prayer. Some years ago a number of the ordinances of the Kitáb-i-Aqdas including that Obligatory Prayer were, for reasons of wisdom, [pg 126]recorded separately and sent away together with other sacred writings, for the purposes of preservation and protection. Later these three Obligatory Prayers were revealed.

64. QUESTION: In determining time, is it permissible to rely on clocks and watches?

ANSWER: It is permissible to rely on clocks and watches.

65. QUESTION: In the Tablet of Obligatory Prayers, three prayers are revealed; is the performance of all three required or not?

ANSWER: It is enjoined to offer one of these three prayers; whichever is performed sufficeth.

66. QUESTION: Are ablutions for the morning prayer still valid for the noonday prayer? And similarly, are ablutions carried out at noon still valid in the evening?

ANSWER: Ablutions are connected with the Obligatory Prayer for which they are performed, and must be renewed for each prayer.

67. QUESTION: Concerning the long Obligatory Prayer, it is required to stand up and "turn unto God". This seemeth to indicate that it is not necessary to face the Qiblih; is this so or not?

ANSWER: The Qiblih is intended.

68. QUESTION: Concerning the sacred verse: "Recite ye the verses of God every morn and eventide."

[pg 127]
ANSWER: The intention is all that hath been sent down from the Heaven of Divine Utterance. The prime requisite is the eagerness and love of sanctified souls to read the Word of God. To read one verse, or even one word, in a spirit of joy and radiance, is preferable to the perusal of many Books.

69. QUESTION: May a person, in drawing up his will, assign some portion of his property—beyond that which is devoted to payment of Ḥuqúqu'lláh and the settlement of debts—to works of charity, or is he entitled to do no more than allocate a certain sum to cover funeral and burial expenses, so that the rest of his estate will be distributed in the manner fixed by God among the designated categories of heirs?

ANSWER: A person hath full jurisdiction over his property. If he is able to discharge the Ḥuqúqu'lláh, and is free of debt, then all that is recorded in his will, and any declaration or avowal it containeth, shall be acceptable. God, verily, hath permitted him to deal with that which He hath bestowed upon him in whatever manner he may desire.

70. QUESTION: Is the use of the burial ring enjoined exclusively for adults, or is it for minors as well?

ANSWER: It is for adults only. The Prayer for the Dead is likewise for adults.

71. QUESTION: Should a person wish to fast at a time [pg 128]other than in the month of ‘Alá, is this permissible or not; and if he hath vowed or pledged himself to such a fast, is this valid and acceptable?

ANSWER: The ordinance of fasting is such as hath already been revealed. Should someone pledge himself, however, to offer up a fast to God, seeking in this way the fulfilment of a wish, or to realize some other aim, this is permissible, now as heretofore. Howbeit, it is God’s wish, exalted be His glory, that vows and pledges be directed to such objectives as will profit mankind.

72. QUESTION: Again a question hath been asked concerning the residence and personal clothing: are these to revert, in the absence of male offspring, to the House of Justice, or are they to be distributed like the rest of the estate?

ANSWER: Two thirds of the residence and personal clothing pass to the female offspring, and one third to the House of Justice, which God hath made to be the treasury of the people.

73. QUESTION: If, upon completion of the year of patience, the husband refuseth to allow divorce, what course should be adopted by the wife?

ANSWER: When the period is ended divorce is effected. However, it is necessary that there be witnesses to the beginning and end of this period, so that they can be called upon to give testimony should the need arise.

[pg 129]
74. QUESTION: Concerning the definition of old age.

ANSWER: To the Arabs it denoteth the furthest extremity of old age, but for the people of Bahá it is from the age of seventy.

75. QUESTION: Concerning the limit of fasting for

someone travelling on foot.

ANSWER: The limit is set at two hours. If this is exceeded, it is permissible to break the Fast.

76. QUESTION: Concerning observance of the Fast by people engaged in hard labour during the month of fasting.

ANSWER: Such people are excused from fasting; however, in order to show respect to the law of God and for the exalted station of the Fast, it is most commendable and fitting to eat with frugality and in private.

77. QUESTION: Do ablutions performed for the Obligatory Prayer suffice for the ninety-five repetitions of the Greatest Name?

ANSWER: It is unnecessary to renew the ablutions.

78. QUESTION: Concerning clothes and jewellery which a husband may have purchased for his wife: are these to be distributed, after his death, amongst his heirs, or are they specially for the wife?

ANSWER: Aside from used clothing, whatever there may be, jewellery or otherwise, belongeth to [pg 130]the husband, except what is proven to have been gifts to the wife.

79. QUESTION: Concerning the criterion of justness when proving some matter dependent on the testimony of two just witnesses.

ANSWER: The criterion of justness is a good reputation among the people. The testimony of all God's servants, of whatever faith or creed, is acceptable before His Throne.

80. QUESTION: If the deceased hath not settled his obligation to Ḥuqúqu'lláh, nor paid his other debts, are these to be discharged by proportionate deductions from the residence, personal clothing and the rest of the estate,

or are the residence and personal clothing set aside for the male offspring, and consequently the debts must be settled from the rest of the estate? And if the rest of the estate is insufficient for this purpose, how should the debts be settled?

ANSWER: Outstanding debts and payments of Ḥuqúq should be settled from the remainder of the estate, but if this is insufficient for the purpose, the shortfall should be met from his residence and personal clothing.

81. QUESTION: Should the third Obligatory Prayer be offered while seated or standing?

ANSWER: It is preferable and more fitting to stand in an attitude of humble reverence.

82. QUESTION: Concerning the first Obligatory Prayer [pg 131]it hath been ordained, "one should perform it at whatever time one findeth oneself in a state of humbleness and longing adoration": is it to be performed once in twenty-four hours, or more frequently?

ANSWER: Once in twenty-four hours is sufficient; this is that which hath been uttered by the Tongue of Divine Command.

83. QUESTION: Concerning the definition of "morning", "noon" and "evening".

ANSWER: These are sunrise, noon and sunset. The allowable times for Obligatory Prayers are from morning till noon, from noon till sunset, and from sunset till two hours thereafter. Authority is in the hand of God, the Bearer of the Two Names.

84. QUESTION: Is it permissible for a believer to marry an unbeliever?

ANSWER: Both taking and giving in marriage are permissible; thus did the Lord decree when He ascended

the throne of bounteousness and grace.

85. QUESTION: Concerning the Prayer for the Dead: should it precede or follow the interment? And is facing the Qiblih required?

ANSWER: Recital of this prayer should precede interment; and as regards the Qiblih: "Whichever way ye turn, there is the face of God."[18]

[pg 132]
86. QUESTION: At noon, which is the time for two of the Obligatory Prayers—the short midday prayer, and the prayer to be offered in the morning, noon, and evening—is it necessary in this case to perform two ablutions or would one suffice?

ANSWER: The renewal of ablutions is unnecessary.

87. QUESTION: Concerning the dowry for village-dwellers which is to be of silver: is it the bride or bridegroom who is intended or both of them? And what is to be done if one is a city-dweller and the other a village-dweller?

ANSWER: The dowry is determined by the dwelling-place of the bridegroom; if he be a city-dweller, the dowry is of gold, and if he be a village-dweller, it is of silver.

88. QUESTION: What is the criterion for determining if one is a city-dweller or a village-dweller? If a city-dweller taketh up residence in a village, or a village-dweller in a city, intending to settle permanently, what ruling is applicable? Is the place of birth the deciding factor?

ANSWER: The criterion is permanent residence and, depending on where this is, the injunction in the Book must be observed accordingly.

89. QUESTION: In the holy Tablets it hath been revealed that when someone acquireth the equivalent of nineteen mit̲h̲q̲áls of gold, he should pay the Right of God on that

[pg 133]sum. Might it be explained how much of this nineteen should be paid?

ANSWER: Nineteen out of one hundred is established by the ordinance of God. Computation should be made on this basis. It may then be ascertained what amount is due on nineteen.

90. QUESTION: When one's wealth exceeds nineteen, is it necessary for it to increase by a further nineteen before Ḥuqúq is due again, or would it be due on any increase?

ANSWER: Any amount added to nineteen is exempt from Ḥuqúq until it reacheth a further nineteen.

91. QUESTION: Concerning pure water, and the point at which it is considered used.

ANSWER: Small quantities of water, such as one cupful, or even two or three, must be considered used after a single washing of the face and hands. But a kurr[19] or more of water remaineth unchanged after one or two washings of the face, and there is no objection to its use unless it is altered in one of the three ways,[20] for example its colour is changed, in which case it should be looked upon as used.

92. QUESTION: In a treatise in Persian on various questions, the age of maturity hath been set at fifteen; is [pg 134]marriage likewise conditional upon the reaching of maturity, or is it permissible before that time?

ANSWER: Since the consent of both parties is required in the Book of God, and since, before maturity, their consent or lack of it cannot be ascertained, marriage is therefore conditional upon reaching the age of maturity, and is not permissible before that time.

93. QUESTION: Concerning fasting and obligatory prayer by the sick.

ANSWER: In truth, I say that obligatory prayer and fasting occupy an exalted station in the sight of God. It is, however, in a state of health that their virtue can be realized. In time of ill-health it is not permissible to observe these obligations; such hath been the bidding of the Lord, exalted be His glory, at all times. Blessed be such men and women as pay heed, and observe His precepts. All praise be unto God, He who hath sent down the verses and is the Revealer of undoubted proofs!

94. QUESTION: Concerning mosques, chapels and temples.

ANSWER: Whatever hath been constructed for the worship of the one true God, such as mosques, chapels and temples, must not be used for any purpose other than the commemoration of His Name. This is an ordinance of God, and he who violateth it is verily of those who have transgressed. No harm attacheth to the builder, for he [pg 135]hath performed his deed for the sake of God, and hath received and will continue to receive his just reward.

95. QUESTION: Regarding the appointments of a place of business, which are needed for carrying on one's work or profession: are they subject to the payment of Ḥuqúqu'lláh, or are they covered by the same ruling as the household furnishings?

ANSWER: They are covered by the same ruling as the household furnishings.

96. QUESTION: Concerning the exchange of property held in trust for cash or other forms of property, to guard against depreciation or loss.

ANSWER: Regarding the written question on the exchange of property held in trust to guard against depreciation and loss, such exchange is permissible on condition that the substitute will be equivalent in value. Thy Lord, verily, is the Expounder, the Omniscient, and He, truly, is the Ordainer, the Ancient of Days.

97. QUESTION: Concerning the washing of the feet in winter and summer.

ANSWER: It is the same in both cases; warm water is preferable, but there can be no objection to cold.

98. QUESTION: A further question on divorce.

ANSWER: Since God, exalted be His glory, doth [pg 136]not favour divorce, nothing was revealed on this issue. However, from the beginning of the separation until the end of one year, two people or more must remain informed as witnesses; if, by the end, there is no reconciliation, divorce taketh place. This must be recorded in the registry by the religious judicial officer of the city appointed by the Trustees of the House of Justice. Observance of this procedure is essential lest those that are possessed of an understanding heart be saddened.

99. QUESTION: Concerning consultation.

ANSWER: If consultation among the first group of people assembled endeth in disagreement, new people should be added, after which persons to the number of the Greatest Name, or fewer or more, shall be chosen by lot. Whereupon the consultation shall be renewed, and the outcome, whatever it is, shall be obeyed. If, however, there is still disagreement, the same procedure should be repeated once more, and the decision of the majority shall prevail. He, verily, guideth whomsoever He pleaseth to the right way.

100. QUESTION: Concerning inheritance.

ANSWER: Regarding inheritance, that which the Primal Point hath ordained—may the souls of all else but Him be offered up for His sake—is well pleasing. The existing heirs should receive their allotted shares of the inheritance, while a statement of the remainder must be submitted to [pg 137]the Court of the Most High. In His hand is the source of authority; He ordaineth as He

pleaseth. In this regard, a law was revealed in the Land of Mystery,[21] temporarily awarding the missing heirs' inheritance to the existing heirs until such time as the House of Justice shall be established, when the decree concerning this will be promulgated. The inheritance, however, of those who emigrated in the same year as the Ancient Beauty, hath been awarded to their heirs, and this is a bounty of God bestowed upon them.

101. QUESTION: Concerning the law on treasure trove.

ANSWER: Should a treasure be found, one third thereof is the right of the discoverer, and the other two thirds should be expended by the men of the House of Justice for the welfare of all people. This shall be done after the establishment of the House of Justice, and until that time it shall be committed to the keeping of trustworthy persons in each locality and territory. He, in truth, is the Ruler, the Ordainer, the Omniscient, the All-Informed.

102. QUESTION: Concerning Ḥuqúq on real estate which yieldeth no profit.

ANSWER: The ordinance of God is that real estate which hath ceased to yield income, that is, [pg 138]from which no profit accrueth, is not liable to payment of Ḥuqúq. He, verily, is the Ruler, the Munificent.

103. QUESTION: Concerning the holy verse: "In regions where the days and nights grow long, let times of prayer be gauged by clocks..."

ANSWER: The intention is those territories that are remote. In these climes, however, the difference in length is but a few hours, and therefore this ruling doth not apply.

104. In the Tablet to ‘Abá Badí, this holy verse hath been revealed: "Verily, We have enjoined on every son to serve his father." Such is the decree which We have set forth in the Book.

105. And in another Tablet, these exalted words have been revealed: O Muḥammad! The Ancient of Days hath turned His countenance towards thee, making mention of thee, and exhorting the people of God to educate their children. Should a father neglect this most weighty commandment laid down in the Kitáb-i-Aqdas by the Pen of the Eternal King, he shall forfeit rights of fatherhood, and be accounted guilty before God. Well is it with him who imprinteth on his heart the admonitions of the Lord, and steadfastly cleaveth unto them. God, in truth, enjoineth on His servants what shall assist and profit them, and enable them to draw nigh unto Him. He is the Ordainer, the Everlasting.

[pg 139]
106. He is God, exalted be He, the Lord of majesty and power! The Prophets and Chosen Ones have all been commissioned by the One True God, magnified be His glory, to nurture the trees of human existence with the living waters of uprightness and understanding, that there may appear from them that which God hath deposited within their inmost selves. As may be readily observed, each tree yieldeth a certain fruit, and a barren tree is but fit for fire. The purpose of these Educators, in all they said and taught, was to preserve man's exalted station. Well is it with him who in the Day of God hath laid fast hold upon His precepts and hath not deviated from His true and fundamental Law. The fruits that best befit the tree of human life are trustworthiness and godliness, truthfulness and sincerity; but greater than all, after recognition of the unity of God, praised and glorified be He, is regard for the rights that are due to one's parents. This teaching hath been mentioned in all the Books of God, and reaffirmed by the Most Exalted Pen. Consider that which the Merciful Lord hath revealed in the Qur'án, exalted are His words: "Worship ye God, join with Him no peer or likeness; and show forth kindliness and charity towards your parents..." Observe how loving-kindness to one's parents hath been linked to recognition of the one true God! Happy they who are endued with true wisdom

and understanding, who see and perceive, who read and understand, and who observe that which God hath [pg 140]revealed in the Holy Books of old, and in this incomparable and wondrous Tablet.

107. In one of the Tablets He, exalted be His words, hath revealed: And in the matter of Zakát, We have likewise decreed that you should follow what hath been revealed in the Qur'án.

Synopsis And Codification Of The Laws And Ordinances Of The Kitáb-i-Aqdas

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Synopsis And Codification

II. ANTICIPATION OF THE INSTITUTION OF THE GUARDIANSHIP

Notes

1. the sweet-smelling savour of My garment #4

This is an allusion to the story of Joseph in the Qur'án and the Old Testament, in which Joseph's garment, brought by his brothers to Jacob, their father, enabled Jacob to identify his beloved long-lost son. The metaphor of the fragrant "garment" is frequently used in the Bahá'í Writings to refer to the recognition of the Manifestation of God and His Revelation.

Bahá'u'lláh, in one of His Tablets, describes Himself as the "Divine Joseph" Who has been "bartered away" by the heedless "for the most paltry of prices". The Báb, in the Qayyúmu'l-Asmá, identifies Bahá'u'lláh as the "true Joseph" and forecasts the ordeals that He would endure at the hands of His treacherous brother (see note 190). Likewise, Shoghi Effendi draws a parallel between the intense jealousy which the preeminence of 'Abdu'l-Bahá had aroused in His half-brother, Mírzá Muḥammad-'Alí, and the deadly envy "which the superior excellence of Joseph had kindled in the hearts of his brothers".

2. We have unsealed the choice Wine with the fingers of might and power. #5

The consumption of wine and other intoxicants is prohibited in the Kitáb-i-Aqdas (see notes 144 and 170).

Reference to the use of "wine" in an allegorical sense—such as being the cause of spiritual ecstasy—is found, not only in the Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh, but in the Bible, in the Qur'án, and in ancient Hindu traditions.

For example, in the Qur'án the righteous are promised that they will be given to drink of the "choice sealed wine". In His Tablets, Bahá'u'lláh identifies the "choice Wine" with His Revelation whose "musk-laden fragrance" has been wafted "upon all created things". He states that He has "unsealed" this "Wine", thereby disclosing spiritual truths that were hitherto unknown, and enabling those who quaff thereof to "discern the splendours of the light of divine unity" and to "grasp the essential purpose underlying the Scriptures of God".

In one of His meditations, Bahá'u'lláh entreats God to supply the believers with "the choice Wine of Thy mercy, that it may cause them to be forgetful of any one except Thee, and to arise to serve Thy Cause, and to be steadfast in their love for Thee".

3. We have enjoined obligatory prayer upon you #6

In Arabic, there are several words for prayer. The word "salát", which appears here in the original, refers to a particular category of prayers, the recitation of which at specific times of the day is enjoined on the believers. To differentiate this category of prayers from other kinds, the word has been translated as "obligatory prayer".

Bahá'u'lláh states that "obligatory prayer and fasting occupy an exalted station in the sight of God" (Q and A 93). 'Abdu'l-Bahá affirms that such prayers are "conducive to humility and submissiveness, to setting one's face towards God and expressing devotion to Him", and that through these prayers "man holdeth communion with God, seeketh to draw near unto Him, converseth with the true Beloved of his heart, and attaineth spiritual stations".

The Obligatory Prayer (see note 9) referred to in this verse has been superseded by the three Obligatory Prayers later revealed by Bahá'u'lláh (Q and A 63). The texts of the three prayers currently in use, together with instructions regarding their recital, are to be found in this volume in Some Texts Supplementary to the Kitáb-i-Aqdas.

A number of the items in Questions and Answers deal with aspects of the three new Obligatory Prayers. Bahá'u'lláh clarifies that the individual is permitted to choose any one of the three Obligatory Prayers (Q and A 65). Other provisions are elucidated in Questions and Answers, numbers 66, 67, 81, and 82.

The details of the law concerning obligatory prayer are summarized in section IV.A.1.-17. of the Synopsis and

Codification.

4. nine rak’áhs #6

A rak’áh is the recitation of specifically revealed verses accompanied by a prescribed set of genuflections and other movements.

The Obligatory Prayer originally enjoined by Bahá’u’lláh upon His followers consisted of nine rak’áhs. The precise nature of this prayer and the specific instructions for its recitation are unknown, as the prayer has been lost. (See note 9.)

In a Tablet commenting on the presently-binding Obligatory Prayers, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá indicates that "in every word and movement of the Obligatory Prayer there are allusions, mysteries and a wisdom that man is unable to comprehend, and letters and scrolls cannot contain".

Shoghi Effendi explains that the few simple directions given by Bahá’u’lláh for the recital of certain prayers not only have a spiritual significance but that they also help the individual "to fully concentrate when praying and meditating".

5. at noon and in the morning and the evening #6

Regarding the definition of the words "morning", "noon" and "evening", at which times the currently binding medium Obligatory Prayer is to be recited, Bahá'u'lláh has stated that these coincide with "sunrise, noon and sunset" (Q and A 83). He specifies that the "allowable times for Obligatory Prayers are from morning till noon, from noon till sunset, and from sunset till two hours thereafter". Further, 'Abdu'l-Bahá has stated that the morning Obligatory Prayer may be said as early as dawn.

The definition of "noon" as the period "from noon till sunset" applies to the recitation of the short Obligatory Prayer as well as the medium one.

6. We have relieved you of a greater number #6

The requirements for obligatory prayer called for in the Bábí and Islamic Dispensations were more demanding than those for the performance of the Obligatory Prayer consisting of nine rak'áhs that was prescribed in the Kitáb-i-Aqdas (see note 4).

In the Bayán, the Báb prescribed an Obligatory Prayer consisting of nineteen rak'áhs which was to be performed once in a twenty-four-hour period—from noon of one day to noon of the next.

The Muslim prayer is recited five times a day, namely, in the early morning, at midday, in the afternoon and evening, and at night. While the number of rak'áhs varies according to the time of recitation, a total of seventeen rak'áhs are offered in the course of a day.

7. When ye desire to perform this prayer, turn ye towards the Court of My Most Holy Presence, this Hallowed Spot that God hath ... decreed to be the Point of Adoration for the denizens of the Cities of Eternity #6

The "Point of Adoration", that is, the point to which the worshipper should turn when offering obligatory prayer, is called the Qiblih. The concept of Qiblih has existed in previous religions. Jerusalem in the past had been fixed for this purpose. Muḥammad changed the Qiblih to Mecca. The Báb's instructions in the Arabic Bayán were:

> The Qiblih is indeed He Whom God will make manifest; whenever He moveth, it moveth, until He shall come to rest.

This passage is quoted by Bahá'u'lláh in the Kitáb-i-Aqdas (# 137) and confirmed by Him in the above-noted verse. He has also indicated that facing in the direction of the Qiblih is a "fixed requirement for the recitation of obligatory prayer" (Q and A 14 and 67). However, for other prayers and devotions the individual may face in any direction.

8. and when the Sun of Truth and Utterance shall set, turn your faces towards the Spot that We have ordained for you #6

Bahá'u'lláh ordains His resting-place as the Qiblih after His passing. The Most Holy Tomb is at Bahjí, Akká. 'Abdu'l-Bahá describes that Spot as the "luminous Shrine", "the place around which circumambulate the Concourse on High".

In a letter written on his behalf, Shoghi Effendi uses the analogy of the plant turning in the direction of the sun to explain the spiritual significance of turning towards the Qiblih:

> ...just as the plant stretches out to the sunlight —from which it receives life and growth—so we turn our hearts to the Manifestation of God, Bahá'u'lláh, when we pray; ... we turn our faces ... to where His dust lies on this earth as a symbol of the inner act.

9. We have set forth the details of obligatory prayer in another Tablet. #8

The original Obligatory Prayer had "for reasons of wisdom" been revealed by Bahá'u'lláh in a separate Tablet (Q and A 63). It was not released to the believers in His lifetime, having been superseded by the three Obligatory Prayers now in use.

Shortly after the Ascension of Bahá'u'lláh, the text of this prayer, along with a number of other Tablets, was stolen by Muḥammad-'Alí, the Arch-breaker of His Covenant.

10. the Prayer for the Dead #8

The Prayer for the Dead (see Some Texts Supplementary to the Kitáb-i-Aqdas) is the only Bahá'í obligatory prayer which is to be recited in congregation; it is to be recited by one believer while all present stand in silence (see note 19). Bahá'u'lláh has clarified that the Prayer for the Dead is required only when the deceased is an adult (Q and A 70), that the recital should precede the interment of the deceased, and that there is no requirement to face the Qiblih when saying this prayer (Q and A 85).

Further details concerning the Prayer for the Dead are summarized in the Synopsis and Codification, section IV.A. 13.-14.

11. six specific passages have been sent down by God, the Revealer of Verses #8

The passages that form part of the Prayer for the Dead comprise the repetition of the greeting "Alláh-u-Abhá" (God is the All-Glorious) six times, each followed by nineteen repetitions of one of six specifically revealed verses. These verses are identical with those in the Prayer for the Dead revealed by the Báb in the Bayán. Bahá'u'lláh added a supplication to precede these passages.

12. Hair doth not invalidate your prayer, nor aught from which the spirit hath departed, such as bones and the like. Ye are free to wear the fur of the sable as ye would that of the beaver, the squirrel, and other animals #9

In some earlier religious Dispensations, the wearing of the hair of certain animals or having certain other objects on one's person was held to invalidate one's prayer. Bahá'u'lláh here confirms the Báb's pronouncement in the Arabic Bayán that such things do not invalidate one's prayer.

13. We have commanded you to pray and fast from the beginning of maturity #10

Bahá’u’lláh defines the "age of maturity with respect to religious duties" as "fifteen for both men and women" (Q and A 20). For details of the period of fasting, see note 25.

14. He hath exempted from this those who are weak from illness or age #10

The exemption of those who are weak due to illness or advanced age from offering the Obligatory Prayers and from fasting is explained in Questions and Answers. Bahá'u'lláh indicates that in "time of ill-health it is not permissible to observe these obligations" (Q and A 93). He defines old age, in this context, as being from seventy (Q and A 74). In answer to a question, Shoghi Effendi has clarified that people who attain the age of seventy are exempt, whether or not they are weak.

Exemption from fasting is also granted to the other specific categories of people listed in the Synopsis and Codification, section IV.B.5. See notes 20, 30 and 31 for additional discussion.

15. God hath granted you leave to prostrate yourselves on any surface that is clean, for We have removed in this regard the limitation that had been laid down in the Book # 10

The requirements of prayer in previous Dispensations have often included prostration. In the Arabic Bayán the Báb called upon the believers to lay their foreheads on surfaces of crystal when prostrating. Similarly, in Islám, certain restrictions are imposed with regard to the surface on which Muslims are permitted to prostrate. Bahá'u'lláh abrogates such restrictions and simply specifies "any surface that is clean".

16. Let him that findeth no water for ablution repeat five times the words "In the Name of God, the Most Pure, the Most Pure", and then proceed to his devotions. #10

Ablutions are to be performed by the believer in preparation for the offering of obligatory prayer. They consist of washing the hands and face. If water is unavailable, the repetition five times of the specifically revealed verse is prescribed. See note 34 for a general discussion of ablutions.

Antecedents in earlier Dispensations for the provision of substitute procedures to be followed when no water is available are found in the Qur'án and in the Arabic Bayán.

17. In regions where the days and nights grow long, let times of prayer be gauged by clocks and other instruments that mark the passage of the hours. #10

This refers to territories situated in the extreme north or south, where the duration of days and nights varies markedly (Q and A 64 and 103). This provision applies also to fasting.

18. We have absolved you from the requirement of performing the Prayer of the Signs. #11

The Prayer of the Signs is a special form of Muslim obligatory prayer that was ordained to be said in times of natural events, like earthquakes, eclipses, and other such phenomena, which may cause fear and are taken to be signs or acts of God. The requirement of performing this prayer has been annulled. In its place a Bahá'í may say, "Dominion is God's, the Lord of the seen and the unseen, the Lord of creation," but this is not obligatory (Q and A 52).

19. Save in the Prayer for the Dead, the practice of congregational prayer hath been annulled. #12

Congregational prayer, in the sense of formal obligatory prayer which is to be recited in accordance with a prescribed ritual as, for example, is the custom in Islám where Friday prayer in the mosque is led by an imám, has been annulled in the Bahá'í Dispensation. The Prayer for the Dead (see note 10) is the only congregational prayer prescribed by Bahá'í law. It is to be recited by one of those present while the remainder of the party stands in silence; the reader has no special status. The congregation is not required to face the Qiblih (Q and A 85).

The three daily Obligatory Prayers are to be recited individually, not in congregation.

There is no prescribed way for the recital of the many other Bahá'í prayers, and all are free to use such non-obligatory prayers in gatherings or individually as they please. In this regard, Shoghi Effendi states that

> ...although the friends are thus left to follow their own inclination, ... they should take the utmost care that any manner they practise should not acquire too rigid a character, and thus develop into an institution. This is a point which the friends should always bear in mind, lest they deviate from the clear path indicated in the Teachings.

20. God hath exempted women who are in their courses from obligatory prayer and fasting. #13

Exemption from obligatory prayer and fasting is granted to women who are menstruating; they should, instead, perform their ablutions (see note 34) and repeat 95 times a day between one noon and the next, the verse "Glorified be God, the Lord of Splendour and Beauty". This provision has its antecedent in the Arabic Bayán, where a similar dispensation was granted.

In some earlier religious Dispensations, women in their courses were considered ritually unclean and were forbidden to observe the duties of prayer and fasting. The concept of ritual uncleanness has been abolished by Bahá'u'lláh (see note 106).

The Universal House of Justice has clarified that the provisions in the Kitáb-i-Aqdas granting exemptions from certain duties and responsibilities are, as the word indicates, exemptions and not prohibitions. Any believer is, therefore, free to avail himself or herself of an applicable exemption if he or she so wishes. However, the House of Justice counsels that, in deciding whether to do so or not, the believer should use wisdom and realize that Bahá'u'lláh has granted these exemptions for good reason.

The prescribed exemption from obligatory prayer, originally related to the Obligatory Prayer consisting of nine rak'áhs, is now applicable to the three Obligatory Prayers which superseded it.

21. When travelling, if ye should stop and rest in some safe spot, perform ye—men and women alike—a single prostration in place of each unsaid Obligatory Prayer #14

Exemption from obligatory prayer is granted to those who find themselves in such a condition of insecurity that the saying of the Obligatory Prayers is not possible. The exemption applies whether one is travelling or at home, and it provides a means whereby Obligatory Prayers which have remained unsaid on account of these insecure circumstances may be compensated for.

Bahá'u'lláh has made it clear that obligatory prayer "is not suspended during travel" so long as one can find a "safe spot" in which to perform it (Q and A 58).

Numbers 21, 58, 59, 60, and 61 in Questions and Answers amplify this provision.

22. Upon completing your prostrations, seat yourselves cross-legged #14

The Arabic expression "haykalu’t-tawhíd", translated here as "cross-legged", means the "posture of unity". It has traditionally signified a cross-legged position.

23. Say: God hath made My hidden love the key to the Treasure #15

There is a well-known Islamic tradition concerning God and His creation:

> I was a Hidden Treasure. I wished to be made known, and thus I called creation into being in order that I might be known.

References and allusions to this tradition are found throughout the Bahá'í Writings. For example, in one of His prayers, Bahá'u'lláh reveals:

> Lauded be Thy name, O Lord my God! I testify that Thou wast a hidden Treasure wrapped within Thine immemorial Being and an impenetrable Mystery enshrined in Thine own Essence. Wishing to reveal Thyself, Thou didst call into being the Greater and the Lesser Worlds, and didst choose Man above all Thy creatures, and didst make Him a sign of both of these worlds, O Thou Who art our Lord, the Most Compassionate! Thou didst raise Him up to occupy Thy throne before all the people of Thy creation. Thou didst enable Him to unravel Thy mysteries, and to shine with the lights of Thine inspiration and Thy Revelation, and to manifest Thy names and Thine attributes. Through Him Thou didst adorn the preamble of the book of Thy creation, O Thou Who art the Ruler of the universe Thou hast fashioned! (Prayers and Meditations by Bahá'u'lláh)

Likewise, in the Hidden Words, He states:

> O Son of Man! I loved thy creation, hence I created thee. Wherefore, do thou love Me, that I may name thy name and fill thy soul with the spirit of life.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá, in His commentary on the above-cited tradition, wrote:

> O wayfarer in the path of the Beloved! Know thou that the main purpose of this holy tradition is to make mention of the stages of God’s concealment and manifestation within the Embodiments of Truth, They who are the Dawning-places of His All-Glorious Being. For example, before the flame of the undying Fire is lit and manifest, it existeth by itself within itself in the hidden identity of the universal Manifestations, and this is the stage of the "Hidden Treasure". And when the blessed Tree is kindled by itself within itself, and that Divine Fire burneth by its essence within its essence, this is the stage of "I wished to be made known". And when it shineth forth from the Horizon of the universe with infinite Divine Names and Attributes upon the contingent and placeless worlds, this constituteth the emergence of a new and wondrous creation which correspondeth to the stage of "Thus I called creation into being". And when the sanctified souls rend asunder the veils of all earthly attachments and worldly conditions, and hasten to the stage of gazing on the beauty of the Divine Presence and are honoured by recognizing the Manifestation and are able to witness the splendour of God’s Most Great Sign in their hearts, then will the purpose of creation, which is the knowledge of Him Who is the Eternal Truth, become manifest.

24. O Pen of the Most High! #16

"Pen of the Most High", "the Supreme Pen" and "the Most Exalted Pen" are references to Bahá'u'lláh, illustrating His function as Revealer of the Word of God.

25. We have enjoined upon you fasting during a brief period #16

Fasting and obligatory prayer constitute the two pillars that sustain the revealed Law of God. Bahá'u'lláh in one of His Tablets affirms that He has revealed the laws of obligatory prayer and fasting so that through them the believers may draw nigh unto God.

Shoghi Effendi indicates that the fasting period, which involves complete abstention from food and drink from sunrise till sunset, is

> ...essentially a period of meditation and prayer, of spiritual recuperation, during which the believer must strive to make the necessary readjustments in his inner life, and to refresh and reinvigorate the spiritual forces latent in his soul. Its significance and purpose are, therefore, fundamentally spiritual in character. Fasting is symbolic, and a reminder of abstinence from selfish and carnal desires.

Fasting is enjoined on all the believers once they attain the age of 15 and until they reach the age of 70 years.

A summary of the detailed provisions concerning the law of fasting and of the exemptions granted to certain categories of people is contained in the Synopsis and Codification, section IV.B.1.-6. For a discussion of the exemptions from fasting see notes 14, 20, 30 and 31.

The nineteen-day period of fasting coincides with the Bahá'í month of 'Alá, usually 2-20 March, immediately after the termination of the Intercalary Days (see notes 27 and 147), and is followed by the feast of Naw-Rúz (see

note 26).

26. and at its close have designated for you Naw-Rúz as a feast #16

The Báb introduced a new calendar, known now as the Badí or Bahá'í calendar (see notes 27 and 147). According to this calendar, a day is the period from sunset to sunset. In the Bayán, the Báb ordained the month of 'Alá to be the month of fasting, decreed that the day of Naw-Rúz should mark the termination of that period, and designated Naw-Rúz as the Day of God. Bahá'u'lláh confirms the Badí calendar wherein Naw-Rúz is designated as a feast.

Naw-Rúz is the first day of the new year. It coincides with the spring equinox in the northern hemisphere, which usually occurs on 21 March. Bahá'u'lláh explains that this feast day is to be celebrated on whatever day the sun passes into the constellation of Aries (i.e. the vernal equinox), even should this occur one minute before sunset (Q and A 35). Hence Naw-Rúz could fall on 20, 21, or 22 March, depending on the time of the equinox.

Bahá'u'lláh has left the details of many laws to be filled in by the Universal House of Justice. Among these are a number of matters affecting the Bahá'í calendar. The Guardian has stated that the implementation, worldwide, of the law concerning the timing of Naw-Rúz will require the choice of a particular spot on earth which will serve as the standard for the fixing of the time of the spring equinox. He also indicated that the choice of this spot has been left to the decision of the Universal House of Justice.

27. Let the days in excess of the months be placed before the month of fasting. #16

The Badí calendar is based on the solar year of 365 days, 5 hours, and 50 odd minutes. The year consists of 19 months of 19 days each (i.e. 361 days), with the addition of four extra days (five in a leap year). The Báb did not specifically define the place for the intercalary days in the new calendar. The Kitáb-i-Aqdas resolves this question by assigning the "excess" days a fixed position in the calendar immediately preceding the month of ‘Alá, the period of fasting. For further details see the section on the Bahá’í calendar in The Bahá’í World, volume XVIII.

28. We have ordained that these ... shall be the manifestations of the letter Há #16

Known as the Ayyám-i-Há (the Days of Há), the Intercalary Days have the distinction of being associated with "the letter Há". The abjad numerical value of this Arabic letter is five, which corresponds to the potential number of intercalary days.

The letter "Há" has been given several spiritual meanings in the Holy Writings, among which is as a symbol of the Essence of God.

29. these days of giving that precede the season of restraint #16

Bahá'u'lláh enjoined upon His followers to devote these days to feasting, rejoicing and charity. In a letter written on Shoghi Effendi's behalf it is explained that "the intercalary days are specially set aside for hospitality, the giving of gifts, etc.".

30. The traveller ... not bound by the Fast #16

The minimum duration of a journey which exempts the believer from fasting is defined by Bahá'u'lláh (Q and A 22 and 75). The details of this provision are summarized in the Synopsis and Codification, section IV.B.5.a.i.-v.

Shoghi Effendi has clarified that while travellers are exempt from fasting, they are free to fast if they so wish. He also indicated that the exemption applies during the whole period of one's travel, not just the hours one is in a train or car, etc.

31. The traveller, the ailing, those who are with child or giving suck, are not bound by the Fast; they have been exempted by God as a token of His grace. #16

Exemption from fasting is granted to those who are ill or of advanced age (see note 14), women in their courses (see note 20), travellers (see note 30) and to women who are pregnant and those who are nursing. This exemption is also extended to people who are engaged in heavy labour, who, at the same time, are advised "to show respect to the law of God and for the exalted station of the Fast" by eating "with frugality and in private" (Q and A 76). Shoghi Effendi has indicated that the types of work which would exempt people from the Fast will be defined by the Universal House of Justice.

32. Abstain from food and drink from sunrise to sundown #17

This relates to the period of fasting. In one of His Tablets, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, after stating that fasting consists of abstinence from food and drink, further indicates that smoking is a form of "drink". In Arabic the verb "drink" applies equally to smoking.

33. It hath been ordained that every believer in God ... shall, each day ... repeat "Alláh-u-Abhá" ninety-five times. #18

"Alláh-u-Abhá" is an Arabic phrase meaning "God the All-Glorious". It is a form of the Greatest Name of God (see note 137). In Islám there is a tradition that among the many names of God, one was the greatest; however, the identity of this Greatest Name was hidden. Bahá'u'lláh has confirmed that the Greatest Name is "Bahá".

The various derivatives of the word "Bahá" are also regarded as the Greatest Name. Shoghi Effendi's secretary writing on his behalf explains that

> The Greatest Name is the Name of Bahá'u'lláh. "Yá Bahá'u'l-Abhá" is an invocation meaning: "O Thou Glory of Glories!". "Alláh-u-Abhá" is a greeting which means: "God the All-Glorious". Both refer to Bahá'u'lláh. By Greatest Name is meant that Bahá'u'lláh has appeared in God's Greatest Name, in other words, that He is the supreme Manifestation of God.

The greeting "Alláh-u-Abhá" was adopted during the period of Bahá'u'lláh's exile in Adrianople.

The repetition of "Alláh-u-Abhá" ninety-five times is to be preceded by the performance of ablutions (see note 34).

34. Perform ye ... ablutions for the Obligatory Prayer #18

Ablutions are specifically associated with certain prayers. They must precede the offering of the three Obligatory Prayers, the daily recitation of "Alláh-u-Abhá" ninety-five times, and the recital of the verse prescribed as an alternative to obligatory prayer and fasting for women in their courses (see note 20).

The prescribed ablutions consist of washing the hands and the face in preparation for prayer. In the case of the medium Obligatory Prayer, this is accompanied by the recitation of certain verses (see Some Texts Revealed by Bahá'u'lláh Supplementary to the Kitáb-i-Aqdas).

That ablutions have a significance beyond washing may be seen from the fact that even should one have bathed oneself immediately before reciting the Obligatory Prayer, it would still be necessary to perform ablutions (Q and A 18).

When no water is available for ablutions, a prescribed verse is to be repeated five times (see note 16), and this provision is extended to those for whom the use of water would be physically harmful (Q and A 51).

The detailed provisions of the law concerning ablutions are set out in the Synopsis and Codification, section IV.A.10.a.-g., as well as in Questions and Answers numbers 51, 62, 66, 77 and 86.

35. Ye have been forbidden to commit murder #19

The prohibition against taking another's life is repeated by Bahá'u'lláh in paragraph 73 of the Kitáb-i-Aqdas. Penalties are prescribed for premeditated murder (see note 86). In the case of manslaughter, it is necessary to pay a specified indemnity to the family of the deceased (see Kitáb-i-Aqdas, # 188).

36. or adultery #19

The Arabic word "ziná", here translated as "adultery", signifies both fornication and adultery. It applies not only to sexual relations between a married person and someone who is not his or her spouse, but also to extramarital sexual intercourse in general. One form of "ziná" is rape. The only penalty prescribed by Bahá'u'lláh is for those who commit fornication (see note 77); penalties for other kinds of sexual offence are left to the Universal House of Justice to determine.

37. backbiting or calumny #19

Backbiting, slander and dwelling on the faults of others have been repeatedly condemned by Bahá'u'lláh. In the Hidden Words, He clearly states: "O Son of Being! How couldst thou forget thine own faults and busy thyself with the faults of others? Whoso doeth this is accursed of Me." And again: "O Son of Man! Breathe not the sins of others so long as thou art thyself a sinner. Shouldst thou transgress this command, accursed wouldst thou be, and to this I bear witness." This strong admonition is further reiterated in His last work, "the Book of My Covenant": "Verily I say, the tongue is for mentioning what is good, defile it not with unseemly talk. God hath forgiven what is past. Henceforward everyone should utter that which is meet and seemly, and should refrain from slander, abuse and whatever causeth sadness in men."

38. We have divided inheritance into seven categories #20

The Bahá'í laws of inheritance apply only in case of intestacy, that is, when the individual dies without leaving a will. In the Kitáb-i-Aqdas (# 109), Bahá'u'lláh instructs every believer to write a will. He elsewhere clearly states that the individual has full jurisdiction over his property and is free to determine the manner in which his or her estate is to be divided and to designate, in the will, those, whether Bahá'í or non-Bahá'í, who should inherit (Q and A 69). In this connection, a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi explains that:

> ...even though a Bahá'í is permitted in his will to dispose of his wealth in the way he wishes, yet he is morally and conscientiously bound to always bear in mind, while writing his will, the necessity of his upholding the principle of Bahá'u'lláh regarding the social function of wealth, and the consequent necessity of avoiding its over-accumulation and concentration in a few individuals or groups of individuals.

This verse of the Aqdas introduces a lengthy passage in which Bahá'u'lláh elaborates the Bahá'í law of inheritance. In reading this passage one should bear in mind that the law is formulated with the presumption that the deceased is a man; its provisions apply, mutatis mutandis, when the deceased is a woman.

The system of inheritance which provides for distribution of the deceased's estate among seven categories of heirs (children, spouse, father, mother, brothers, sisters, and

teachers) is based on the provisions set out by the Báb in the Bayán. The major features of the Bahá'í laws of inheritance in the case of intestacy are:

1. If the deceased is a father and his estate includes a personal residence, such residence passes to the eldest son (Q and A 34).

2. If the deceased has no male descendants, two thirds of the residence pass to his female descendants and the remaining third passes to the House of Justice (Q and A 41, 72). See note 42 concerning the levels of the institution of the House of Justice to which this law applies. (See also note 44.)

3. The remainder of the estate is divided among the seven categories of heirs. For details of the number of shares to be received by each group, see Questions and Answers, number 5, and Synopsis and Codification, section IV.C.3.a.

4. In case there is more than one heir in any category the share allotted to that class should be divided between them equally, be they male or female.

5. In cases where there is no issue, the share of the children reverts to the House of Justice (Q and A 7, 41).

6. Should one leave offspring, but either part or all of the other categories of heirs be non-existent, two thirds of their shares revert to the offspring and one third to the House of Justice (Q and A 7).

7. Should none of the specified categories exist, two thirds of the estate revert to the nephews and nieces of the deceased. If these do not exist, the same shares revert to the aunts and uncles; lacking these, to their sons and daughters. In any case the remaining third reverts to the House of Justice.

8. Should one leave none of the aforementioned heirs, the

entire estate reverts to the House of Justice.

9. Bahá'u'lláh states that non-Bahá'ís have no right to inherit from their Bahá'í parents or relatives (Q and A 34). Shoghi Effendi in a letter written on his behalf indicates that this restriction applies "only to such cases when a Bahá'í dies without leaving a will and when, therefore, his property will have to be divided in accordance with the rules set forth in the Aqdas. Otherwise, a Bahá'í is free to bequeath his property to any person, irrespective of religion, provided however he leaves a will, specifying his wishes." It is always possible, therefore, for a Bahá'í to provide for his or her non-Bahá'í partner, children or relatives by leaving a will.

Additional details of the laws of inheritance are summarized in the Synopsis and Codification, section IV.C.3.a.-o.

39. to the brothers, five parts ... to the sisters, four parts #20

Questions and Answers amplifies the provisions of the law as it relates to the shares of the inheritance allocated to the brothers and sisters of the deceased. If the brother or sister is from the same father as the deceased, he or she will inherit his or her full allotted share. If, however, the brother or sister is from another father he or she will inherit only two thirds of the allotted share, the remaining one third reverting to the House of Justice (Q and A 6). Further, in the case where the deceased has full brothers or full sisters among his heirs, half-brothers and half-sisters from the mother's side do not inherit (Q and A 53). The half-brothers and half-sisters will, of course, be due to receive inheritance from their own father's estate.

40. the teachers #20

In a Tablet, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá compares teachers who are involved with the spiritual education of the child to the "spiritual father" who "endoweth his child with everlasting life". He explains that this is the reason that "teachers are listed among the heirs" in the "Law of God".

Bahá’u’lláh specifies the conditions under which the teacher inherits and the share he or she receives (Q and A 33).

41. When We heard the clamour of the children as yet unborn, We doubled their share and decreased those of the rest. #20

In the Báb's laws of inheritance the children of the deceased were allotted nine parts consisting of 540 shares. This allocation constituted less than a quarter of the whole estate. Bahá'u'lláh doubled their portion to 1,080 shares and reduced those allotted to the other six categories of heirs. He also outlines the precise intention of this verse and its implications for the distribution of the inheritance (Q and A 5).

42. the House of Justice #21

In referring to the House of Justice in the Kitáb-i-Aqdas, Bahá'u'lláh does not always explicitly distinguish between the Universal House of Justice and the Local House of Justice, both of which institutions are ordained in that Book. He usually refers simply to "the House of Justice", leaving open for later clarification the level or levels of the whole institution to which each law would apply.

In a Tablet enumerating the revenues of the local treasury, 'Abdu'l-Bahá includes those inheritances for which there are no heirs, thus indicating that the House of Justice referred to in these passages of the Aqdas relating to inheritance is the local one.

43. Should the deceased leave offspring, but none of the other categories of heirs #22

Bahá'u'lláh clarifies that "This ruling hath both general and specific application, which is to say that whenever any category of this latter class of heirs is absent, two thirds of their inheritance pass to the offspring and the remaining third to the House of Justice" (Q and A 7).

44. We have assigned the residence and personal clothing of the deceased to the male, not female, offspring, nor to the other heirs. #25

In a Tablet, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá indicates that the residence and personal clothing of a deceased man remain in the male line. They pass to the eldest son and in the absence of the eldest son, they pass to the second-eldest son, and so on. He explains that this provision is an expression of the law of primogeniture, which has invariably been upheld by the Law of God. In a Tablet to a follower of the Faith in Persia He wrote: "In all the Divine Dispensations the eldest son hath been given extraordinary distinctions. Even the station of prophethood hath been his birthright." With the distinctions given to the eldest son, however, go concomitant duties. For example, he has the moral responsibility, for the sake of God, to care for his mother and also to consider the needs of the other heirs.

Bahá’u’lláh clarifies various aspects of this part of the law of inheritance. He specifies that if there be more than one residence, the principal and most important one passes to the male offspring. The remaining residences will, together with the other possessions of the deceased, have to be divided among the heirs (Q and A 34), and He indicates that in the absence of male offspring, two thirds of the principal residence and the personal clothing of the deceased father will revert to the female issue and one third to the House of Justice (Q and A 72). Further, when the deceased is a woman, Bahá’u’lláh states that all her used clothing is to be equally divided amongst her daughters. Her unworn clothing, jewels and property must be divided among her heirs, as well as her used clothing if she leaves no daughter (Q and A 37).

45. Should the son of the deceased have passed away in the days of his father and have left children, they will inherit their father's share #26

This aspect of the law applies only in the case of the son who predeceases his father or mother. If the daughter of the deceased be dead and leave issue, her share will have to be divided according to the seven categories specified in the Most Holy Book (Q and A 54).

46. If the deceased should leave children who are under age, their share of the inheritance must be entrusted to a reliable individual #27

The word "amín", translated in this paragraph as "reliable individual" and "trustee", conveys in Arabic a wide range of meanings connected principally with the idea of trustworthiness, but signifying also such qualities as reliability, loyalty, faithfulness, uprightness, honesty, and so forth. Used in legal parlance "amín" denotes, among other things, a trustee, guarantor, custodian, guardian, and keeper.

47. Division of the estate should take place only after the Ḥuqúqu'lláh hath been paid, any debts have been settled, the expenses of the funeral and burial defrayed #28

Bahá'u'lláh specifies that the order of precedence for payment of these expenses is first the funeral and burial expenses, then the debts of the deceased, then the Ḥuqúqu'lláh (see note 125) (Q and A 9). He also specifies that when applying the estate to these, payment must first be made out of the residue of the estate and then, if this is insufficient, out of the residence and personal clothing of the deceased (Q and A 80).

48. This is that hidden knowledge which shall never change, since its beginning is with nine #29

In the Arabic Bayán the Báb described His inheritance law as being "in accordance with a hidden knowledge in the Book of God—a knowledge that shall never change or be replaced". He also stated that the numbers by which the division of the inheritance was expressed had been invested with a significance intended to aid in the recognition of Him Whom God will make manifest.

The "nine" mentioned here is represented in the Arabic text by the letter "Tá", which is its equivalent in the abjad notation (see Glossary). It is the first element of the Báb's division of inheritance, where He designates "nine parts" as the share of the children. The significance of nine lies in its being the numerical equivalent of the Greatest Name "Bahá", alluded to in the next part of this verse as "the concealed and manifest, the inviolable and unapproachably exalted Name". (See also note 33.)

49. The Lord hath ordained that in every city a House of Justice be established #30

The institution of the House of Justice consists of elected councils which operate at the local, national and international levels of society. Bahá'u'lláh ordains both the Universal House of Justice and the Local Houses of Justice in the Kitáb-i-Aqdas. 'Abdu'l-Bahá, in His Will and Testament, provides for the Secondary (National or Regional) Houses of Justice and outlines the method to be pursued for the election of the Universal House of Justice.

In the verse cited above, the reference is to the Local House of Justice, an institution which is to be elected in a locality whenever there are nine or more resident adult Bahá'ís. For this purpose, the definition of adult was temporarily fixed at the age of 21 years by the Guardian, who indicated it was open to change by the Universal House of Justice in the future.

Local and Secondary Houses of Justice are, for the present, known as Local Spiritual Assemblies and National Spiritual Assemblies. Shoghi Effendi has indicated that this is a "temporary appellation" which,

> ...as the position and aims of the Bahá'í Faith are better understood and more fully recognized, will gradually be superseded by the permanent and more appropriate designation of House of Justice. Not only will the present-day Spiritual Assemblies be styled differently in future, but they will be enabled also to add to their present functions those powers, duties, and prerogatives necessitated by the recognition of the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh,

not merely as one of the recognized religious systems of the world, but as the State Religion of an independent and Sovereign Power.

50. the number of Bahá #30

The abjad numerical equivalent of "Bahá" is nine. The Universal House of Justice and the National and Local Spiritual Assemblies currently have nine members each, the minimum number prescribed by Bahá'u'lláh.

51. It behoveth them to be the trusted ones of the Merciful among men #30

The general powers and duties of the Universal House of Justice, the National Spiritual Assemblies and the Local Spiritual Assemblies and the qualifications for membership are set forth in the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh and 'Abdu'l-Bahá, in the letters of Shoghi Effendi, and in the elucidations of the Universal House of Justice. The major functions of these institutions are outlined in the Constitution of the Universal House of Justice, and in those of the National and Local Spiritual Assemblies.

52. take counsel together #30

Bahá'u'lláh has established consultation as one of the fundamental principles of His Faith and has exhorted the believers to "take counsel together in all matters". He describes consultation as "the lamp of guidance which leadeth the way" and as "the bestower of understanding". Shoghi Effendi states that the "principle of consultation ... constitutes one of the basic laws" of the Bahá'í Administrative Order.

In Questions and Answers, number 99, Bahá'u'lláh outlines an approach to consultation and stresses the importance of achieving unanimity in decision-making, failing which the majority decision must prevail. The Universal House of Justice has clarified that this guidance concerning consultation was revealed before Spiritual Assemblies had been established and was in answer to a question about the Bahá'í teachings on consultation. The House of Justice affirms that the emergence of Spiritual Assemblies, to which the friends may always turn for assistance, in no way prohibits them from following the procedure outlined in Questions and Answers. This approach may be used by the friends, should they wish, when they desire to consult on their personal problems.

53. Build ye houses of worship throughout the lands #31

The Bahá'í House of Worship is dedicated to the praise of God. The House of Worship forms the central edifice of the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár (the Dawning-place of the Praise of God), a complex which, as it unfolds in the future, will comprise in addition to the House of Worship a number of dependencies dedicated to social, humanitarian, educational, and scientific pursuits. 'Abdu'l-Bahá describes the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár as "one of the most vital institutions in the world", and Shoghi Effendi indicates that it exemplifies in tangible form the integration of "Bahá'í worship and service". Anticipating the future development of this institution, Shoghi Effendi envisages that the House of Worship and its dependencies "shall afford relief to the suffering, sustenance to the poor, shelter to the wayfarer, solace to the bereaved, and education to the ignorant". In the future, Bahá'í Houses of Worship will be constructed in every town and village.

54. The Lord hath ordained that those of you who are able shall make pilgrimage to the sacred House #32

Two sacred Houses are covered by this ordinance, the House of the Báb in Sh̲íráz and the House of Bahá'u'lláh in Bagh̲dád. Bahá'u'lláh has specified that pilgrimage to either of these two Houses fulfils the requirement of this passage (Q and A 25, 29). In two separate Tablets, known as Súriy-i-Hájj (Q and A 10), Bahá'u'lláh has prescribed specific rites for each of these pilgrimages. In this sense, the performance of a pilgrimage is more than simply visiting these two Houses.

After the passing of Bahá'u'lláh, 'Abdu'l-Bahá designated the Shrine of Bahá'u'lláh at Bahjí as a place of pilgrimage. In a Tablet, He indicates that the "Most Holy Shrine, the Blessed House in Bagh̲dád and the venerated House of the Báb in Sh̲íráz" are "consecrated to pilgrimage", and that it is "obligatory" to visit these places "if one can afford it and is able to do so, and if no obstacle stands in one's way". No rites have been prescribed for pilgrimage to the Most Holy Shrine.

55. and from this He hath exempted women as a mercy on His part #32

In the Bayán, the Báb enjoined the ordinance of pilgrimage once in a lifetime upon those of His followers who were financially able to undertake the journey. He stated that the obligation was not binding on women in order to spare them the rigours of travel.

Bahá'u'lláh likewise exempts women from His pilgrimage requirements. The Universal House of Justice has clarified that this exemption is not a prohibition, and that women are free to perform the pilgrimage.

56. to engage in some occupation #33

It is obligatory for men and women to engage in a trade or profession. Bahá'u'lláh exalts "engagement in such work" to the "rank of worship" of God. The spiritual and practical significance of this law, and the mutual responsibility of the individual and society for its implementation are explained in a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi:

> With reference to Bahá'u'lláh's command concerning the engagement of the believers in some sort of profession: the Teachings are most emphatic on this matter, particularly the statement in the Aqdas to this effect which makes it quite clear that idle people who lack the desire to work can have no place in the new World Order. As a corollary of this principle, Bahá'u'lláh further states that mendicity should not only be discouraged but entirely wiped out from the face of society. It is the duty of those who are in charge of the organization of society to give every individual the opportunity of acquiring the necessary talent in some kind of profession, and also the means of utilizing such a talent, both for its own sake and for the sake of earning the means of his livelihood. Every individual, no matter how handicapped and limited he may be, is under the obligation of engaging in some work or profession, for work, especially when performed in the spirit of service, is according to Bahá'u'lláh a form of worship. It has not only a utilitarian purpose, but has a value in itself, because it draws us nearer to God, and enables us to better grasp His purpose for us in this world. It is obvious, therefore, that the inheritance of

> wealth cannot make anyone immune from daily work.

In one of His Tablets, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá states that "if a person is incapable of earning a living, is stricken by dire poverty or becometh helpless, then it is incumbent on the wealthy or the Deputies to provide him with a monthly allowance for his subsistence.... By ‘Deputies’ is meant the representatives of the people, that is to say the members of the House of Justice." (See also note 162 on mendicancy.)

In response to a question concerning whether Bahá’u’lláh’s injunction requires a wife and mother, as well as her husband, to work for a livelihood, the Universal House of Justice has explained that Bahá’u’lláh’s directive is for the friends to be engaged in an occupation which will profit themselves and others, and that homemaking is a highly honourable and responsible work of fundamental importance to society.

Concerning the retirement from work for individuals who have reached a certain age, Shoghi Effendi in a letter written on his behalf stated that "this is a matter on which the International House of Justice will have to legislate as there are no provisions in the Aqdas concerning it".

57. The kissing of hands hath been forbidden in the Book. #34

In a number of earlier religious Dispensations and in certain cultures the kissing of the hand of a religious figure or of a prominent person was expected as a mark of reverence and deference to such persons and as a token of submission to their authority. Bahá'u'lláh prohibits the kissing of hands and, in His Tablets, He also condemns such practices as prostrating oneself before another person and other forms of behaviour that abase one individual in relation to another. (See note 58.)

58. To none is it permitted to seek absolution from another soul #34

Bahá'u'lláh prohibits confession to, and seeking absolution of one's sins from, a human being. Instead one should beg forgiveness from God. In the Tablet of Bisḥárát, He states that "such confession before people results in one's humiliation and abasement", and He affirms that God "wisheth not the humiliation of His servants".

Shoghi Effendi sets the prohibition into context. His secretary has written on his behalf that we

> ...are forbidden to confess to any person, as do the Catholics to their priests, our sins and shortcomings, or to do so in public, as some religious sects do. However, if we spontaneously desire to acknowledge we have been wrong in something, or that we have some fault of character, and ask another person's forgiveness or pardon, we are quite free to do so.

The Universal House of Justice has also clarified that Bahá'u'lláh's prohibition concerning the confession of sins does not prevent an individual from admitting transgressions in the course of consultations held under the aegis of Bahá'í institutions. Likewise, it does not preclude the possibility of seeking advice from a close friend or of a professional counsellor regarding such matters.

59. Amongst the people is he who seateth himself amid the sandals by the door whilst coveting in his heart the seat of honour. #36

Traditionally in the East it has been the practice to remove sandals and shoes before entering a gathering. The part of a room farthest from the entrance is regarded as the head of the room and a place of honour where the most prominent among those present are seated. Others sit in descending order towards the door, by which the shoes and sandals have been left and where the most lowly would sit.

60. And among the people is he who layeth claim to inner knowledge #36

This is a reference to people who claim access to esoteric knowledge and whose attachment to such knowledge veils them from the Revelation of the Manifestation of God. Elsewhere Bahá'u'lláh affirms: "They that are the worshippers of the idol which their imaginations have carved, and who call it Inner Reality, such men are in truth accounted among the heathen."

61. How many a man hath secluded himself in the climes of India, denied himself the things that God hath decreed as lawful, imposed upon himself austerities and mortifications #36

These verses constitute the prohibition of monasticism and asceticism. See the Synopsis and Codification, section IV.D. 1.y.iii.-iv. In the Words of Paradise Bahá'u'lláh amplifies these provisions. He states: "Living in seclusion or practising asceticism is not acceptable in the presence of God," and He calls upon those involved to "observe that which will cause joy and radiance". He instructs those who have taken up "their abodes in the caves of the mountains" or who have "repaired to graveyards at night" to abandon these practices, and He enjoins them not to deprive themselves of the "bounties" of this world which have been created by God for humankind. And in the Tablet of Bisḥárát, while acknowledging the "pious deeds" of monks and priests, Bahá'u'lláh calls upon them to "give up the life of seclusion and direct their steps towards the open world and busy themselves with that which will profit themselves and others". He also grants them leave "to enter into wedlock that they may bring forth one who will make mention of God".

62. Whoso layeth claim to a Revelation direct from God, ere the expiration of a full thousand years #37

The Dispensation of Bahá'u'lláh will last until the coming of the next Manifestation of God, Whose advent will not take place before at least "a full thousand years" will have elapsed. Bahá'u'lláh cautions against ascribing to "this verse" anything other than its "obvious meaning", and in one of His Tablets, He specifies that "each year" of this thousand year period consists of "twelve months according to the Qur'án, and of nineteen months of nineteen days each, according to the Bayán".

The intimation of His Revelation to Bahá'u'lláh in the Síyáh-Ch̲ál of Ṭihrán, in October 1852, marks the birth of His Prophetic Mission and hence the commencement of the one thousand years or more that must elapse before the appearance of the next Manifestation of God.

63. This is that of which We gave you forewarning when We were dwelling in ‘Iráq, then later while in the Land of Mystery, and now from this Resplendent Spot. #37

The "Land of Mystery" refers to Adrianople, and "this Resplendent Spot" is a reference to Akká.

64. Amongst the people is he whose learning hath made him proud ... who, when he heareth the tread of sandals following behind him, waxeth greater in his own esteem #41

In the East, the practice has been for followers of a religious leader, out of deference, to walk a pace or two behind him.

65. Nimrod #41

The Nimrod referred to in this verse is, in both Jewish and Islamic traditions, a King who persecuted Abraham and whose name became symbolic of great pride.

66. Aghṣán #42

"Aghṣán" (plural of Ghusn) is the Arabic word for "Branches". This term is used by Bahá'u'lláh to designate His male descendants. It has particular implications not only for the disposition of endowments but also for the succession of authority following the passing of Bahá'u'lláh (see note 145) and of 'Abdu'l-Bahá. Bahá'u'lláh, in the Book of His Covenant, appointed 'Abdu'l-Bahá, His eldest son, as the Centre of His Covenant and the Head of the Faith. 'Abdu'l-Bahá, in His Will and Testament, appointed Shoghi Effendi, His eldest grandson, as the Guardian and Head of the Faith.

This passage of the Aqdas, therefore, anticipates the succession of chosen Aghṣán and thus the institution of the Guardianship and envisages the possibility of a break in their line. The passing of Shoghi Effendi in 1957 precipitated the very situation provided for in this passage, in that the line of Aghṣán ended before the Universal House of Justice had been established (see note 67).

67. revert to the people of Bahá #42

Bahá'u'lláh provides for the possibility that the line of Aghṣán would terminate prior to the establishment of the Universal House of Justice. He designated that in such a situation "endowments shall revert to the people of Bahá". The term "people of Bahá" is used with a number of different meanings in the Bahá'í Writings. In this instance, they are described as those "who speak not except by His leave and judge not save in accordance with what God hath decreed in this Tablet". Following the passing of Shoghi Effendi in 1957, the Hands of the Cause of God directed the affairs of the Cause until the election of the Universal House of Justice in 1963 (see note 183).

68. Shave not your heads #44

In some religious traditions it is considered desirable to shave one's head. The shaving of the head is forbidden by Bahá'u'lláh, and He makes it clear that the provision contained in His Súriy-i-Hájj requiring pilgrims to the Holy House in Sh̲íráz to shave their heads has been superseded through this verse of the Kitáb-i-Aqdas (Q and A 10).

69. it is not seemly to let the hair pass beyond the limit of the ears #44

Shoghi Effendi has made clear that, unlike the prohibition on shaving the head, this law forbidding the growing of the hair beyond the lobe of the ear pertains only to men. The application of this law will require clarification by the Universal House of Justice.

70. Exile and imprisonment are decreed for the thief #45

Bahá'u'lláh states that the determination of the degree of penalty, in accordance with the seriousness of the offence, rests with the House of Justice (Q and A 49). The punishments for theft are intended for a future condition of society, when they will be supplemented and applied by the Universal House of Justice.

71. on the third offence, place ye a mark upon his brow so that, thus identified, he may not be accepted in the cities of God and His countries #45

The mark to be placed on the thief's forehead serves the purpose of warning people of his proclivities. All details concerning the nature of the mark, how the mark is to be applied, how long it must be worn, on what conditions it may be removed, as well as the seriousness of various degrees of theft have been left by Bahá'u'lláh for the Universal House of Justice to determine when the law is applied.

72. Whoso wisheth to make use of vessels of silver and gold is at liberty to do so. #46

In the Bayán the Báb allowed the use of gold and silver utensils, thus abrogating the Islamic condemnation of their use which stems not from an explicit injunction of the Qur'án but from Muslim traditions. Bahá'u'lláh here confirms the Báb's ruling.

73. Take heed lest, when partaking of food, ye plunge your hands into the contents of bowls and platters. #46

This prohibition was defined by Shoghi Effendi as "plunging one’s hand in food". In many parts of the world it has been customary to eat with the hands from a communal bowl.

74. Adopt ye such usages as are most in keeping with refinement. #46

This is the first of several passages referring to the importance of refinement and cleanliness. The original Arabic word "látafah", rendered here as "refinement", has a wide range of meanings with both spiritual and physical implications, such as elegance, gracefulness, cleanliness, civility, politeness, gentleness, delicacy and graciousness, as well as being subtle, refined, sanctified and pure. In accordance with the context of the various passages where it occurs in the Kitáb-i-Aqdas, it has been translated either as "refinement" or "cleanliness".

75. He Who is the Dawning-place of God's Cause hath no partner in the Most Great Infallibility. #47

In the Tablet of Iṣḥráqát, Bahá'u'lláh affirms that the Most Great Infallibility is confined to the Manifestations of God.

Chapter 45 in Some Answered Questions is devoted to an explanation by 'Abdu'l-Bahá of this verse of the Aqdas. In this chapter He stresses, among other things, the inseparability of essential "infallibility" from the Manifestations of God, and asserts that "whatever emanates from Them is identical with the truth, and conformable to reality", that "They are not under the shadow of the former laws", and "Whatever They say is the word of God, and whatever They perform is an upright action".

76. Unto every father hath been enjoined the instruction of his son and daughter in the art of reading and writing #48

‘Abdu’l-Bahá, in His Tablets, not only calls attention to the responsibility of parents to educate all their children, but He also clearly specifies that the "training and culture of daughters is more necessary than that of sons", for girls will one day be mothers, and mothers are the first educators of the new generation. If it is not possible, therefore, for a family to educate all the children, preference is to be accorded to daughters since, through educated mothers, the benefits of knowledge can be most effectively and rapidly diffused throughout society.

77. God hath imposed a fine on every adulterer and adulteress, to be paid to the House of Justice #49

Although the term translated here as adultery refers, in its broadest sense, to unlawful sexual intercourse between either married or unmarried individuals (see note 36 for a definition of the term), ‘Abdu’l-Bahá has specified that the punishment here prescribed is for sexual intercourse between persons who are unmarried. He indicates that it remains for the Universal House of Justice to determine the penalty for adultery committed by a married individual. (See also Q and A 49.)

In one of His Tablets, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá refers to some of the spiritual and social implications of the violation of the laws of morality and, concerning the penalty here described, He indicates that the aim of this law is to make clear to all that such an action is shameful in the eyes of God and that, in the event that the offence can be established and the fine imposed, the principal purpose is the exposure of the offenders—that they are shamed and disgraced in the eyes of society. He affirms that such exposure is in itself the greatest punishment.

The House of Justice referred to in this verse is presumably the Local House of Justice, currently known as the Local Spiritual Assembly.

78. nine mit̲h̲qáls of gold, to be doubled if they should repeat the offence #49

A mit̲h̲qál is a unit of weight. The weight of the traditional mit̲h̲qál used in the Middle East is equivalent to 24 nákh̲uds. However, the mit̲h̲qál used by the Bahá'ís consists of 19 nákh̲uds, "in accordance with the specification of the Bayán" (Q and A 23). The weight of nine of these mit̲h̲qáls equals 32.775 grammes or 1.05374 troy ounces.

In relation to the application of the fine, Bahá'u'lláh clearly specifies that each succeeding fine is double the preceding one (Q and A 23); thus the fine imposed increases in geometrical progression. The imposition of this fine is intended for a future condition of society, at which time the law will be supplemented and applied by the Universal House of Justice.

79. We have made it lawful for you to listen to music and singing. #51

‘Abdu’l-Bahá has written that "Among certain nations of the East, music was considered reprehensible". Though the Qur’án contains no specific guidance on the subject, some Muslims consider listening to music as unlawful, while others tolerate music within certain bounds and subject to particular conditions.

There are a number of passages in the Bahá’í Writings in praise of music. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, for example, asserts that "music, sung or played, is spiritual food for soul and heart".

80. O ye Men of Justice! #52

It has been elucidated in the writings of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá and Shoghi Effendi that, while the membership of the Universal House of Justice is confined to men, both women and men are eligible for election to Secondary and Local Houses of Justice (currently designated as National and Local Spiritual Assemblies).

81. The penalties for wounding or striking a person depend upon the severity of the injury; for each degree the Lord of Judgement hath prescribed a certain indemnity. # 56

While Bahá'u'lláh specified that the extent of the penalty depends upon "the severity of the injury", there is no record of His having set out the details of the size of the indemnity with regard to each degree of offence. The responsibility to determine these devolves upon the Universal House of Justice.

82. Verily, it is enjoined upon you to offer a feast, once in every month #57

This injunction has become the basis for the holding of monthly Bahá'í festivities and as such constitutes the ordination of the Nineteen Day Feast. In the Arabic Bayán the Báb called upon His followers to gather together once every nineteen days to show hospitality and fellowship. Bahá'u'lláh here confirms this and notes the unifying role of such occasions.

'Abdu'l-Bahá and Shoghi Effendi after Him have gradually unfolded the institutional significance of this injunction. 'Abdu'l-Bahá emphasized the importance of the spiritual and devotional character of these gatherings. Shoghi Effendi, besides further elaborating the devotional and social aspects of the Feast, has developed the administrative element of such gatherings and, in systematically instituting the Feast, has provided for a period of consultation on the affairs of the Bahá'í community, including the sharing of news and messages.

In answer to a question as to whether this injunction is obligatory, Bahá'u'lláh stated it was not (Q and A 48). Shoghi Effendi in a letter written on his behalf further comments:

> Attendance at Nineteen Day Feasts is not obligatory but very important, and every believer should consider it a duty and privilege to be present on such occasions.

83. If ye should hunt with beasts or birds of prey, invoke ye the Name of God when ye send them to pursue their quarry; for then whatever they catch shall be lawful unto you, even should ye find it to have died. #60

By this law, Bahá'u'lláh greatly simplifies practices and religious regulations of the past relating to hunting. He has also stated that hunting with such weapons as bows and arrows, guns, and the like, is included in this ruling, but that the consumption of game if it is found dead in a trap or a net is prohibited (Q and A 24).

84. hunt not to excess #60

While hunting is not forbidden by Bahá'u'lláh, He warns against excessive hunting. The Universal House of Justice will, in due course, have to consider what constitutes an excess in hunting.

85. He hath granted them no right to the property of others. #61

The injunction to show kindness to Bahá'u'lláh's kindred does not give them a share in the property of others. This is in contrast to Sh̲ī'ih Muslim practice, in which lineal descendants of Muḥammad are entitled to receive a share of a certain tax.

86. Should anyone intentionally destroy a house by fire, him also shall ye burn; should anyone deliberately take another's life, him also shall ye put to death. #62

The law of Bahá'u'lláh prescribes the death penalty for murder and arson, with the alternative of life imprisonment (see note 87).

In His Tablets 'Abdu'l-Bahá explains the difference between revenge and punishment. He affirms that individuals do not have the right to take revenge, that revenge is despised in the eyes of God, and that the motive for punishment is not vengeance, but the imposition of a penalty for the committed offence. In Some Answered Questions, He confirms that it is the right of society to impose punishments on criminals for the purpose of protecting its members and defending its existence.

With regard to this provision, Shoghi Effendi in a letter written on his behalf gives the following explanation:

> In the Aqdas Bahá'u'lláh has given death as the penalty for murder. However, He has permitted life imprisonment as an alternative. Both practices would be in accordance with His Laws. Some of us may not be able to grasp the wisdom of this when it disagrees with our own limited vision; but we must accept it, knowing His Wisdom, His Mercy and His Justice are perfect and for the salvation of the entire world. If a man were falsely condemned to die, can we not believe Almighty God

> would compensate him a thousandfold, in the next world, for this human injustice? You cannot give up a salutary law just because on rare occasions the innocent may be punished.

The details of the Bahá'í law of punishment for murder and arson, a law designed for a future state of society, were not specified by Bahá'u'lláh. The various details of the law, such as degrees of offence, whether extenuating circumstances are to be taken into account, and which of the two prescribed punishments is to be the norm are left to the Universal House of Justice to decide in light of prevailing conditions when the law is to be in operation. The manner in which the punishment is to be carried out is also left to the Universal House of Justice to decide.

In relation to arson, this depends on what "house" is burned. There is obviously a tremendous difference in the degree of offence between the person who burns down an empty warehouse and one who sets fire to a school full of children.

87. Should ye condemn the arsonist and the murderer to life imprisonment, it would be permissible according to the provisions of the Book. #62

Shoghi Effendi, in response to a question about this verse of the Aqdas, affirmed that while capital punishment is permitted, an alternative, "life imprisonment", has been provided "whereby the rigours of such a condemnation can be seriously mitigated". He states that "Bahá'u'lláh has given us a choice and has, therefore, left us free to use our own discretion within certain limitations imposed by His law". In the absence of specific guidance concerning the application of this aspect of Bahá'í law, it remains for the Universal House of Justice to legislate on the matter in the future.

88. God hath prescribed matrimony unto you. #63

Bahá'u'lláh, in one of His Tablets, states that God, in establishing this law, has made marriage "a fortress for well-being and salvation".

The Synopsis and Codification, section IV.C.1.a.-o., summarizes and synthesizes the provisions in the Kitáb-i-Aqdas and Questions and Answers concerning marriage and the conditions under which it is permitted (Q and A 3, 13, 46, 50, 84, and 92), the law of betrothal (Q and A 43), the payment of the dowry (Q and A 12, 26, 39, 47, 87, and 88), the procedures to be adopted in the event of the prolonged absence of a spouse (Q and A 4 and 27), and sundry other circumstances (Q and A 12 and 47). (See also notes 89-99.)

89. Beware that ye take not unto yourselves more wives than two. Whoso contenteth himself with a single partner from among the maidservants of God, both he and she shall live in tranquillity. #63

While the text of the Kitáb-i-Aqdas appears to permit bigamy, Bahá'u'lláh counsels that tranquillity and contentment derive from monogamy. In another Tablet, He underlines the importance of the individual's acting in such a way as to "bring comfort to himself and to his partner". 'Abdu'l-Bahá, the authorized Interpreter of the Bahá'í Writings, states that in the text of the Aqdas monogamy is in effect enjoined. He elaborates this theme in a number of Tablets, including the following:

> Know thou that polygamy is not permitted under the law of God, for contentment with one wife hath been clearly stipulated. Taking a second wife is made dependent upon equity and justice being upheld between the two wives, under all conditions. However, observance of justice and equity towards two wives is utterly impossible. The fact that bigamy has been made dependent upon an impossible condition is clear proof of its absolute prohibition. Therefore it is not permissible for a man to have more than one wife.

Polygamy is a very ancient practice among the majority of humanity. The introduction of monogamy has been only gradually accomplished by the Manifestations of

God. Jesus, for example, did not prohibit polygamy, but abolished divorce except in the case of fornication; Muḥammad limited the number of wives to four, but making plurality of wives contingent on justice, and reintroducing permission for divorce; Bahá'u'lláh, Who was revealing His Teachings in the milieu of a Muslim society, introduced the question of monogamy gradually in accordance with the principles of wisdom and the progressive unfoldment of His purpose. The fact that He left His followers with an infallible Interpreter of His Writings enabled Him to outwardly permit two wives in the Kitáb-i-Aqdas but uphold a condition that enabled 'Abdu'l-Bahá to elucidate later that the intention of the law was to enforce monogamy.

90. he who would take into his service a maid may do so with propriety #63

Bahá’u’lláh states that a man may employ a maiden for domestic service. This was not permissible under Sh̲í̲’ih Muslim practice unless the employer entered into a marriage contract with her. Bahá’u’lláh emphasizes that the "service" referred to in this verse is solely "such as is performed by any other class of servants, be they young or old, in exchange for wages" (Q and A 30). An employer has no sexual rights over his maid. She is "free to choose a husband at whatever time she pleaseth", for the purchase of women is forbidden (Q and A 30).

91. This is My bidding unto you; hold fast to it as an assistance to yourselves. #63

While marriage is enjoined in the Kitáb-i-Aqdas, Bahá'u'lláh clarifies that it is not obligatory (Q and A 46). Shoghi Effendi, in a letter written on his behalf, also declared that "marriage is by no means an obligation", and he affirmed that "in the last resort, it is for the individual to decide whether he wishes to lead a family life or live in a state of celibacy". If a person has to wait a considerable period of time before finding a spouse, or ultimately must remain single, it does not mean that the individual is thereby unable to fulfil his or her life's purpose, which is fundamentally spiritual.

92. We have conditioned it ... upon the permission of their parents #65

In a letter written on his behalf, Shoghi Effendi has commented on this provision of the law:

> Bahá'u'lláh has clearly stated the consent of all living parents is required for a Bahá'í marriage. This applies whether the parents are Bahá'ís or non-Bahá'ís, divorced for years or not. This great law He has laid down to strengthen the social fabric, to knit closer the ties of the home, to place a certain gratitude and respect in the hearts of the children for those who have given them life and sent their souls out on the eternal journey towards their Creator.

93. No marriage may be contracted without payment of a dowry #66

The Synopsis and Codification, section IV.C.1.j.i.-v., summarizes the main provisions concerning the dowry. These provisions have their antecedents in the Bayán.

The dowry is to be paid by the bridegroom to the bride. It is fixed at 19 mi<u>th</u>qáls of pure gold for city-dwellers, and 19 mi<u>th</u>qáls of silver for village-dwellers (see note 94). Bahá'u'lláh indicates that, if, at the time of the wedding, the bridegroom is unable to pay the dowry in full, it is permissible for him to issue a promissory note to the bride (Q and A 39).

With the Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh many familiar concepts, customs and institutions are redefined and take on new meaning. One of these is the dowry. The institution of dowry is a very ancient practice in many cultures and takes many forms. In some countries it is a payment made by the parents of the bride to the bridegroom; in others it is a payment made by the bridegroom to the parents of the bride, called a "bride-price". In both such cases the amount is often quite considerable. The law of Bahá'u'lláh abolishes all such variants and converts the dowry into a symbolic act whereby the bridegroom presents a gift of a certain limited value to the bride.

94. for city-dwellers at nineteen mit̲h̲qáls of pure gold, and for village-dwellers at the same amount in silver #66

Bahá'u'lláh specifies that the criterion for determining the dowry payment is the location of the permanent residence of the bridegroom, not of the bride (Q and A 87, 88).

95. Whoso wisheth to increase this sum, it is forbidden him to exceed the limit of ninety-five mi<u>th</u><u>q</u>áls... If he content himself, however, with a payment of the lowest level, it shall be better for him according to the Book. #66

In answer to a question about the dowry, Bahá'u'lláh stated:

> Whatever is revealed in the Bayán, in respect to those residing in cities and villages, is approved and should be carried out. However, in the Kitáb-i-Aqdas mention is made of the lowest level. The intention is nineteen mi<u>th</u><u>q</u>áls of silver, specified in the Bayán for village-dwellers. This is more pleasing unto God, provided the two parties agree. The purpose is to promote the comfort of all, and to bring about concord and union among the people. Therefore, the greater the consideration shown in these matters the better it will be... The people of Bahá must associate and deal with each other with the utmost love and sincerity. They should be mindful of the interests of all, especially the friends of God.

'Abdu'l-Bahá, in one of His Tablets, summarized some of the provisions for determining the level of the dowry. The unit of payment mentioned in the extract, cited below, is the "váhid". One váhid is equivalent to nineteen mi<u>th</u><u>q</u>áls. He stated:

City-dwellers must pay in gold and village-dwellers in silver. It dependeth on the financial means at the disposal of the groom. If he is poor, he payeth one váhid; if of modest means, he payeth two váhids; if well-to-do, three váhids; if wealthy, four váhids; and if very rich, he giveth five váhids. It is, in truth, a matter for agreement between the bridegroom, the bride, and their parents. Whatever agreement is reached should be carried out.

In this same Tablet, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá encouraged the believers to refer questions concerning the application of this law to the Universal House of Justice, which has "the authority to legislate". He stressed that "it is this body which will enact laws and legislate upon secondary matters which are not explicit in the Holy Text".

96. should any one of His servants intend to travel, he must fix for his wife a time when he will return home #67

If the husband leaves without informing his wife of the date of his return, and no news of him reaches her and all trace of him is lost, Bahá'u'lláh has stated that, should the husband have been aware of the law prescribed in the Kitáb-i-Aqdas, the wife may remarry after waiting a full year. If, however, the husband was unaware of the law, the wife must wait until news of her husband reaches her (Q and A 4).

97. it behoveth her to wait for a period of nine months, after which there is no impediment to her taking another husband #67

In the event of the husband's failure, either to return at the end of the specified period of time or to notify his wife of a delay, the wife must wait nine months, after which she is free to remarry, though it is preferable for her to wait longer (see note 147 for the Bahá'í calendar).

Bahá'u'lláh states that, in such circumstances, should news reach the wife of "her husband's death or murder", she must also wait nine months, prior to remarrying (Q and A 27). 'Abdu'l-Bahá, in a Tablet, has further clarified that the nine months' waiting period following news of the husband's death applies only if the husband had been away at the time of his death, and not if he dies while at home.

98. she should choose the course that is praiseworthy #67

Bahá'u'lláh defines "the course that is praiseworthy" as "the exercise of patience" (Q and A 4).

99. two just witnesses #67

Bahá'u'lláh sets out "the criterion of justness" in relation to witnesses as "a good reputation among the people". He states that it is not necessary that the witnesses should be Bahá'ís since "The testimony of all God's servants, of whatever faith or creed, is acceptable before His Throne" (Q and A 79).

100. Should resentment or antipathy arise between husband and wife, he is not to divorce her but to bide in patience throughout the course of one whole year #68

Divorce is strongly condemned in the Bahá'í Teachings. If, however, antipathy or resentment develop between the marriage partners, divorce is permissible after the lapse of one full year. During this year of patience, the husband is obliged to provide for the financial support of his wife and children, and the couple is urged to strive to reconcile their differences. Shoghi Effendi affirms that both the husband and wife "have equal right to ask for divorce" whenever either partner "feels it absolutely essential to do so".

In Questions and Answers, Bahá'u'lláh elaborates a number of issues concerning the year of patience, its observance (Q and A 12), establishing the date of its beginning (Q and A 19 and 40), the conditions for reconciliation (Q and A 38), and the role of witnesses and the Local House of Justice (Q and A 73 and 98). In relation to the witnesses, the Universal House of Justice has clarified that in these days the duties of the witnesses in cases of divorce are performed by the Spiritual Assemblies.

The detailed provisions of the Bahá'í laws on divorce are summarized in the Synopsis and Codification, section IV.C.2.a.-i.

101. The Lord hath prohibited ... the practice to which ye formerly had recourse when thrice ye had divorced a woman. #68

This relates to a law of Islám set out in the Qur'án which decreed that under certain conditions a man could not remarry his divorced wife unless she had married and been divorced by another man. Bahá'u'lláh affirms that this is the practice which has been prohibited in the Kitáb-i-Aqdas (Q and A 31).

102. He who hath divorced his wife may choose, upon the passing of each month, to remarry her when there is mutual affection and consent, so long as she hath not taken another husband ... unless, clearly, her circumstances change. #68

Shoghi Effendi states, in a letter written on his behalf, that the intention of "the passing of each month" is not to impose a limitation, and that it is possible for a divorced couple to remarry at any time after their divorce, so long as neither party is currently married to another person.

103. semen is not unclean # 74

In a number of religious traditions and in Sh̲í̲'ih Muslim practice semen has been declared ritually unclean. Bahá'u'lláh has here dispelled this concept. See also note 106 below.

104. Cleave ye unto the cord of refinement #74

‘Abdu’l-Bahá refers to the effect of "purity and holiness, cleanliness and refinement" on the exaltation of "the human condition" and "the development of man’s inner reality". He states: "The fact of having a pure and spotless body exercises an influence upon the spirit of man." (See also note 74.)

105. Wash ye every soiled thing with water that hath undergone no alteration in any one of the three respects #74

The "three respects" referred to in this verse are changes in the colour, taste or smell of the water. Bahá'u'lláh provides additional guidance concerning pure water and the point at which it is considered unsuitable for use (Q and A 91).

106. God hath ... abolished the concept of "uncleanness", whereby divers things and peoples have been held to be impure. #75

The concept of ritual "uncleanness", as understood and practised in some tribal societies and in the religious communities of certain earlier Dispensations, has been abolished by Bahá'u'lláh. He states that through His Revelation "all created things were immersed in the sea of purification". (See also notes 12, 20, and 103.)

107. first day of Ridván #75

This is a reference to the arrival of Bahá'u'lláh and His companions in the Najíbíyyih Garden outside the city of Baghdád, subsequently referred to by the Bahá'ís as the Garden of Ridván. This event, which took place thirty-one days after Naw-Rúz, in April 1863, signalized the commencement of the period during which Bahá'u'lláh declared His Mission to His companions. In a Tablet, He refers to His Declaration as "the Day of supreme felicity" and He describes the Garden of Ridván as "the Spot from which He shed upon the whole of creation the splendours of His Name, the All-Merciful". Bahá'u'lláh spent twelve days in this Garden prior to departing for Istanbul, the place to which He had been banished.

The Declaration of Bahá'u'lláh is celebrated annually by the twelve-day Ridván Festival, described by Shoghi Effendi as "the holiest and most significant of all Bahá'í festivals" (see notes 138 and 140).

108. the Bayán #77

The Bayán, the Mother Book of the Bábí Dispensation, is the title given by the Báb to His Book of Laws, and it is also applied to the entire body of His Writings. The Persian Bayán is the major doctrinal work and principal repository of the laws ordained by the Báb. The Arabic Bayán is parallel in content but smaller and less weighty. When describing the Persian Bayán in God Passes By Shoghi Effendi indicated that it should be regarded "primarily as a eulogy of the Promised One rather than as a code of laws and ordinances designed to be a permanent guide to future generations".

‘Abdu’l-Bahá has written: "The Bayán hath been superseded by the Kitáb-i-Aqdas, except in respect of such laws as have been confirmed and mentioned in the Kitáb-i-Aqdas."

109. the destruction of books #77

In the Tablet of Iṣḥráqát Bahá'u'lláh, referring to the fact that the Báb had made the laws of the Bayán subject to His sanction, states that He put some of the Báb's laws into effect "by embodying them in the Kitáb-i-Aqdas in different words", while others He set aside.

With regard to the destruction of books, the Bayán commanded the Báb's followers to destroy all books except those that were written in vindication of the Cause and Religion of God. Bahá'u'lláh abrogates this specific law of the Bayán.

As to the nature and severity of the laws of the Bayán, Shoghi Effendi in a letter written on his behalf provides the following comment:

> The severe laws and injunctions revealed by the Báb can be properly appreciated and understood only when interpreted in the light of His own statements regarding the nature, purpose and character of His own Dispensation. As these statements clearly reveal, the Bábí Dispensation was essentially in the nature of a religious and indeed social revolution, and its duration had therefore to be short, but full of tragic events, of sweeping and drastic reforms. Those drastic measures enforced by the Báb and His followers were taken with the view of undermining the very foundations of Sḥí'ih orthodoxy, and thus paving the way for the coming of Bahá'u'lláh. To assert the independence of the new Dispensation, and to prepare also the ground for the approaching Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh, the Báb had therefore to reveal very severe laws, even though most of them were never

enforced. But the mere fact that He revealed them was in itself a proof of the independent character of His Dispensation and was sufficient to create such widespread agitation, and excite such opposition on the part of the clergy that led them to cause His eventual martyrdom.

110. We have permitted you to read such sciences as are profitable unto you, not such as end in idle disputation #77

The Bahá'í Writings enjoin the acquisition of knowledge and the study of the arts and sciences. Bahá'ís are admonished to respect people of learning and accomplishment, and are warned against the pursuit of studies that are productive only of futile wrangling.

In His Tablets Bahá'u'lláh counsels the believers to study such sciences and arts as are "useful" and would further "the progress and advancement" of society, and He cautions against sciences which "begin with words and end with words", the pursuit of which leads to "idle disputation". Shoghi Effendi, in a letter written on his behalf, likened sciences that "begin with words and end with words" to "fruitless excursions into metaphysical hair-splittings", and, in another letter, he explained that what Bahá'u'lláh primarily intended by such "sciences" are "those theological treatises and commentaries that encumber the human mind rather than help it to attain the truth".

111. He Who held converse with God #80

This is a traditional Jewish and Islamic title of Moses. Bahá'u'lláh states that with the coming of His Revelation "human ears have been privileged to hear what He Who conversed with God heard upon Sinai".

112. Sinai #80

The mountain where the Law was revealed by God to Moses.

113. the Spirit of God #80

This is one of the titles used in the Islamic and Bahá'í Writings to designate Jesus Christ.

114. Carmel ... Zion #80

Carmel, the "Vineyard of God", is the mountain in the Holy Land where the Shrine of the Báb and the seat of the world administrative centre of the Faith are situated.

Zion is a hill in Jerusalem, the traditional site of the tomb of King David, and is symbolic of Jerusalem as a Holy City.

115. the Crimson Ark #84

The "Crimson Ark" refers to the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh. His followers are designated as the "companions of the Crimson Ark", lauded by the Báb in the Qayyúmu'l-Asmá.

116. O Emperor of Austria! He Who is the Dayspring of God's Light dwelt in the prison of Akká at the time when thou didst set forth to visit the Aqsá Mosque. #85

Francis Joseph (Franz Josef, 1830-1916), Emperor of Austria and King of Hungary, made a pilgrimage to Jerusalem in 1869. While in the Holy Land he failed to take the opportunity to inquire about Bahá'u'lláh Who at that time was a prisoner in Akká (Acre).

The Aqsá Mosque, literally, the "Most Distant" Mosque, is referred to in the Qur'án, and has become identified with the Temple Mount in Jerusalem.

117. O King of Berlin! #86

Kaiser William I (Wilhelm Friedrich Ludwig, 1797-1888), the seventh king of Prussia, was acclaimed first Emperor of Germany in January 1871 at Versailles in France, following the victory of Germany over France in the Franco-Prussian War.

118. the one whose power transcended thy power, and whose station excelled thy station #86

This is a reference to Napoleon III (1808-1873), the Emperor of the French, who was regarded by many historians as the most outstanding monarch of his day in the West.

Bahá'u'lláh addressed two Tablets to Napoleon III, in the second of which He clearly prophesied that Napoleon's kingdom would be "thrown into confusion", that his "empire shall pass" from his hands, and that his people would experience great "commotions".

Within a year, Napoleon III suffered a resounding defeat, at the hands of Kaiser William I, at the Battle of Sedan in 1870. He went in exile to England, where he died three years later.

119. O people of Constantinople! #89

The word here translated as "Constantinople" is, in the original, "Ar-Rúm" or "Rome". This term has generally been used in the Middle East to designate Constantinople and the Eastern Roman Empire, then the city of Byzantium and its empire, and later the Ottoman Empire.

120. O Spot that art situate on the shores of the two seas! #89

This is a reference to Constantinople, now called Istanbul. Located on the Bosphorus, a strait about 31 kilometres long which links the Black Sea and the Sea of Marmara, it is the largest city and seaport of Turkey.

Constantinople was the capital of the Ottoman Empire from 1453 until 1922. During Bahá'u'lláh's sojourn in this city, the tyrannical Sultan 'Abdu'l-'Azíz occupied the throne. The Ottoman Sultans were also the Caliphs, the leaders of Sunní Islám. Bahá'u'lláh anticipated the fall of the Caliphate, which was abolished in 1924.

121. O banks of the Rhine! #90

In one of His Tablets written before the First World War (1914-1918), ‘Abdu’l-Bahá explained that Bahá’u’lláh’s reference to having seen the banks of the Rhine "covered with gore" related to the Franco-Prussian War (1870-1871), and that there was more suffering to come.

In God Passes By Shoghi Effendi states that the "oppressively severe treaty" that was imposed on Germany following its defeat in the First World War "provoked ‘the lamentations’" of Berlin "which half a century before, had been ominously prophesied".

122. O Land of Tá #91

"Tá" is the initial letter of Ṭihrán, the capital of Iran. Bahá'u'lláh has often chosen to represent certain place names by reference to their initial letter. According to the abjad system of reckoning, the numerical value of Tá is nine, which equals the numerical value of the name Bahá.

123. within thee was born the Manifestation of His Glory #92

This is a reference to the birth of Bahá'u'lláh in Ṭihrán on 12 November 1817.

124. O Land of K̲h̲á! #94

A reference to the Iranian province of K̲h̲urásán and neighbouring areas, which include the city of Ish̲q̲ábád (Ashkhabad).

125. Should anyone acquire one hundred mit̲h̲qáls of gold, nineteen mit̲h̲qáls thereof are God's and to be rendered unto Him #97

This verse establishes Ḥuqúqu'lláh, the Right of God, the offering of a fixed portion of the value of the believer's possessions. This offering was made to Bahá'u'lláh as the Manifestation of God and then, following His Ascension, to 'Abdu'l-Bahá as the Centre of the Covenant. In His Will and Testament, 'Abdu'l-Bahá provided that the Ḥuqúqu'lláh was to be offered "through the Guardian of the Cause of God". There now being no Guardian, it is offered through the Universal House of Justice as the Head of the Faith. This fund is used for the promotion of the Faith of God and its interests as well as for various philanthropic purposes. The offering of the Ḥuqúqu'lláh is a spiritual obligation, the fulfilment of which has been left to the conscience of each Bahá'í. While the community is reminded of the requirements of the law of Ḥuqúq, no believer may be approached individually to pay it.

A number of items in Questions and Answers further elaborate this law. The payment of Ḥuqúqu'lláh is based on the calculation of the value of the individual's possessions. If a person has possessions equal in value to at least nineteen mit̲h̲qáls of gold (Q and A 8), it is a spiritual obligation to pay nineteen percent of the total amount, once only, as Ḥuqúqu'lláh (Q and A 89). Thereafter, whenever one's income, after all expenses have been paid, increases the value of one's possessions by the amount of at least nineteen mit̲h̲qáls of gold, one is to pay nineteen percent of this increase, and so on for each further increase (Q and A 8, 90).

Certain categories of possessions, such as one's residence, are exempt from the payment of Ḥuqúqu'lláh (Q and A 8, 42, 95), and specific provisions are outlined to cover cases of financial loss (Q and A 44, 45), the failure of investments to yield a profit (Q and A 102) and for the payment of Ḥuqúq in the event of the person's death (Q and A 9, 69, 80). (In this latter case, see note 47.)

Extensive extracts from Tablets, Questions and Answers, and other Writings concerning the spiritual significance of Ḥuqúqu'lláh and the details of its application have been published in a compilation entitled Ḥuqúqu'lláh.

126. Various petitions have come before Our throne from the believers, concerning laws from God... We have, in consequence, revealed this Holy Tablet and arrayed it with the mantle of His Law that haply the people may keep the commandments of their Lord. #98

"For a number of years", Bahá'u'lláh states in one of His Tablets, "petitions reached the Most Holy Presence from various lands begging for the laws of God, but We held back the Pen ere the appointed time had come." Not until twenty years from the birth of His Prophetic Mission in the Síyáh-Ch̲ál of Ṭihrán had elapsed did Bahá'u'lláh reveal the Kitáb-i-Aqdas, the Repository of the laws of His Dispensation. Even after its revelation the Aqdas was withheld by Him for some time before it was sent to the friends in Persia. This divinely purposed delay in the revelation of the basic laws of God for this age, and the subsequent gradual implementation of their provisions, illustrate the principle of progressive revelation which applies even within the ministry of each Prophet.

127. crimson Spot #100

This is a reference to the prison-city of Akká. In the Bahá'í Writings the word "crimson" is used in several allegorical and symbolic senses. (See also note 115.)

128. the Sadratu’l-Muntahá #100

Literally "the furthermost Lote-Tree", translated by Shoghi Effendi as "the Tree beyond which there is no passing". This is used as a symbol in Islám, for example in the accounts of Muḥammad’s Night Journey, to mark the point in the heavens beyond which neither men nor angels can pass in their approach to God, and thus to delimit the bounds of divine knowledge as revealed to mankind. Hence it is often used in the Bahá’í Writings to designate the Manifestation of God Himself. (See also note 164.)

129. the Mother Book #103

The term "Mother Book" is generally used to designate the central Book of a religious Dispensation. In the Qur'án and Islamic Hadíṯ, the term is used to describe the Qur'án itself. In the Bábí Dispensation, the Bayán is the Mother Book, and the Kitáb-i-Aqdas is the Mother Book of the Dispensation of Bahá'u'lláh. Further, the Guardian in a letter written on his behalf has stated that this concept can also be used as a "collective term indicating the body of the Teachings revealed by Bahá'u'lláh". This term is also used in a broader sense to signify the Divine Repository of Revelation.

130. Whoso interpreteth what hath been sent down from the heaven of Revelation, and altereth its evident meaning #105

In several of His Tablets, Bahá'u'lláh affirms the distinction between allegorical verses, which are susceptible to interpretation, and those verses that relate to such subjects as the laws and ordinances, worship and religious observances, whose meanings are evident and which demand compliance on the part of the believers.

As explained in notes 145 and 184, Bahá'u'lláh designated 'Abdu'l-Bahá, His eldest Son, as His Successor and the Interpreter of His Teachings. 'Abdu'l-Bahá in His turn appointed His eldest grandson, Shoghi Effendi, to succeed Him as interpreter of the holy Writ and Guardian of the Cause. The interpretations of 'Abdu'l-Bahá and Shoghi Effendi are considered divinely guided and are binding on the Bahá'ís.

The existence of authoritative interpretations does not preclude the individual from engaging in the study of the Teachings and thereby arriving at a personal interpretation or understanding. A clear distinction is, however, drawn in the Bahá'í Writings between authoritative interpretation and the understanding that each individual arrives at from a study of its Teachings. Individual interpretations based on a person's understanding of the Teachings constitute the fruit of man's rational power and may well contribute to a greater comprehension of the Faith. Such views, nevertheless, lack authority. In presenting their personal ideas, individuals are cautioned not to discard the authority of the revealed words, not to deny or contend

with the authoritative interpretation, and not to engage in controversy; rather they should offer their thoughts as a contribution to knowledge, making it clear that their views are merely their own.

131. approach not the public pools of Persian baths #106

Bahá'u'lláh prohibits the use of the pools found in the traditional public bath-houses of Persia. In these baths it was the custom for many people to wash themselves in the same pool and for the water to be changed at infrequent intervals. Consequently, the water was discoloured, befouled and unhygienic, and had a highly offensive stench.

132. Avoid ye likewise the malodorous pools in the courtyards of Persian homes #106

Most houses in Persia used to have a pool in their courtyard which served as a reservoir for water used for cleaning, washing and other domestic purposes. Since the water in the pool was stagnant and was not usually changed for weeks at a time, it tended to develop a very unpleasant odour.

133. It is forbidden you to wed your fathers' wives. #107

Marriage with one's stepmother is here explicitly prohibited. This prohibition also applies to marrying one's stepfather. Where Bahá'u'lláh has expressed a law between a man and a woman it applies mutatis mutandis as between a woman and a man unless the context should make this impossible.

'Abdu'l-Bahá and Shoghi Effendi confirmed that, while stepmothers are the only category of relatives mentioned in the text, this does not mean that all other unions within a family are permissible. Bahá'u'lláh states that it devolves upon the House of Justice to legislate "concerning the legitimacy or otherwise of marrying one's relatives" (Q and A 50). 'Abdu'l-Bahá has written that the more distant the blood-relationship between the couple the better, since such marriages provide the basis for the physical well-being of humanity and are conducive to fellowship among mankind.

134. the subject of boys #107

The word translated here as "boys" has, in this context, in the Arabic original, the implication of paederasty. Shoghi Effendi has interpreted this reference as a prohibition on all homosexual relations.

The Bahá'í teachings on sexual morality centre on marriage and the family as the bedrock of the whole structure of human society and are designed to protect and strengthen that divine institution. Bahá'í law thus restricts permissible sexual intercourse to that between a man and the woman to whom he is married.

In a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi it is stated:

> No matter how devoted and fine the love may be between people of the same sex, to let it find expression in sexual acts is wrong. To say that it is ideal is no excuse. Immorality of every sort is really forbidden by Bahá'u'lláh, and homosexual relationships He looks upon as such, besides being against nature. To be afflicted this way is a great burden to a conscientious soul. But through the advice and help of doctors, through a strong and determined effort, and through prayer, a soul can overcome this handicap.

Bahá'u'lláh makes provision for the Universal House of Justice to determine, according to the degree of the offence, penalties for adultery and sodomy (Q and A 49).

135. To none is it permitted to mutter sacred verses before the public gaze as he walketh in the street or marketplace #108

This is an allusion to the practice of certain clerics and religious leaders of earlier Dispensations who, out of hypocrisy and affectation, and in order to win the praise of their followers, would ostentatiously mutter prayers in public places as a demonstration of their piety. Bahá'u'lláh forbids such behaviour and stresses the importance of humility and genuine devotion to God.

136. Unto everyone hath been enjoined the writing of a will. #109

According to the Teachings of Bahá'u'lláh, the individual has a duty to write a will and testament, and is free to dispose of his estate in whatever manner he chooses (see note 38).

Bahá'u'lláh affirms that in drawing up his will "a person hath full jurisdiction over his property", since God has permitted the individual "to deal with that which He hath bestowed upon him in whatever manner he may desire" (Q and A 69). Provisions are set out in the Kitáb-i-Aqdas for the distribution of inheritance in the case of intestacy. (See notes 38-48.)

137. the Most Great Name #109

As explained in note 33, the Greatest Name of God can take various forms, all based on the word "Bahá". The Bahá'ís in the East have implemented this injunction of the Aqdas by heading their wills with such phrases as "O Thou Glory of the All-Glorious", "In the name of God, the All-Glorious" or "He is the All-Glorious" and the like.

138. All Feasts have attained their consummation in the two Most Great Festivals, and in the two other Festivals that fall on the twin days #110

This passage establishes four great festivals of the Bahá'í year. The two designated by Bahá'u'lláh as "the two Most Great Festivals" are, first, the Festival of Ridván, which commemorates Bahá'u'lláh's Declaration of His Prophetic Mission in the Garden of Ridván in Baghdád during twelve days in April/May 1863 and is referred to by Him as "the King of Festivals" and, second, the Báb's Declaration, which occurred in May 1844 in Shíráz. The first, ninth and twelfth days of the Festival of Ridván are Holy Days (Q and A 1), as is the day of the Declaration of the Báb.

The "two other Festivals" are the anniversaries of the births of Bahá'u'lláh and the Báb. In the Muslim lunar calendar these fall on consecutive days, the birth of Bahá'u'lláh on the second day of the month of Muharram 1233 A.H. (12 November 1817), and the birth of the Báb on the first day of the same month 1235 A.H. (20 October 1819), respectively. They are thus referred to as the "Twin Birthdays" and Bahá'u'lláh states that these two days are accounted as one in the sight of God (Q and A 2). He states that, should they fall within the month of fasting, the command to fast shall not apply on those days (Q and A 36). Given that the Bahá'í calendar (see notes 26 and 147) is a solar calendar, it remains for the Universal House of Justice to determine whether the Twin Holy Birthdays are to be celebrated on a solar or lunar basis.

139. the first day of the month of Bahá #111

In the Bahá'í calendar the first month of the year and the first day of each month are given the name "Bahá". The day of Bahá of the month of Bahá is thus the Bahá'í New Year, Naw-Rúz, which was ordained by the Báb as a festival and is here confirmed by Bahá'u'lláh (see notes 26 and 147).

In addition to the seven Holy Days ordained in these passages of the Kitáb-i-Aqdas, the anniversary of the Martyrdom of the Báb was also commemorated as a Holy Day in the lifetime of Bahá'u'lláh and, as a corollary to this, 'Abdu'l-Bahá added the observance of the Ascension of Bahá'u'lláh, making nine Holy Days in all. Two other anniversaries which are observed, but on which work is not suspended, are the Day of the Covenant and the anniversary of the Passing of 'Abdu'l-Bahá. See the section on the Bahá'í calendar in The Bahá'í World, volume XVIII.

140. The Most Great Festival is, indeed, the King of Festivals #112

A reference to the Ridván Festival (see notes 107 and 138).

141. God had formerly laid upon each one of the believers the duty of offering before Our throne priceless gifts from among his possessions. Now ... We have absolved them of this obligation. #114

This passage abrogates a provision of the Bayán which decreed that all objects unparalleled of their kind should, upon the appearance of Him Whom God will make manifest, be rendered unto Him. The Báb explained that, since the Manifestation of God is beyond compare, whatever is peerless in its kind should rightfully be reserved for Him, unless He decrees otherwise.

142. the hour of dawn #115

With reference to attending dawn prayers in the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár, the Bahá'í House of Worship, Bahá'u'lláh has explained that, although the actual time specified in the Book of God is "the hour of dawn", it is acceptable at any time from "the earliest dawn of day, between dawn and sunrise, or even up to two hours after sunrise" (Q and A 15).

143. These Tablets are embellished with the seal of Him Who causeth the dawn to appear, Who lifteth up His voice between the heavens and the earth. #117

Bahá'u'lláh repeatedly affirms the absolute integrity of His Writings as the Word of God. Some of His Tablets also bear the mark of one of His seals. The Bahá'í World, volume V, p. 4, contains a photograph of a number of Bahá'u'lláh's seals.

144. It is inadmissible that man, who hath been endowed with reason, should consume that which stealeth it away. #119

There are many references in the Bahá'í Writings which prohibit the use of wine and other intoxicating drinks and which describe the deleterious effect of such intoxicants on the individual. In one of His Tablets, Bahá'u'lláh states:

> Beware lest ye exchange the Wine of God for your own wine, for it will stupefy your minds, and turn your faces away from the Countenance of God, the All-Glorious, the Peerless, the Inaccessible. Approach it not, for it hath been forbidden unto you by the behest of God, the Exalted, the Almighty.

'Abdu'l-Bahá explains that the Aqdas prohibits "both light and strong drinks", and He states that the reason for prohibiting the use of alcoholic drinks is because "alcohol leadeth the mind astray and causeth the weakening of the body".

Shoghi Effendi, in letters written on his behalf, states that this prohibition includes not only the consumption of wine but of "everything that deranges the mind", and he clarifies that the use of alcohol is permitted only when it constitutes part of a medical treatment which is implemented "under the advice of a competent and conscientious physician, who may have to prescribe it for the cure of some special ailment".

145. turn your faces toward Him Whom God hath purposed, Who hath branched from this Ancient Root #121

Bahá'u'lláh here alludes to 'Abdu'l-Bahá as His Successor and calls upon the believers to turn towards Him. In the Book of the Covenant, His Will and Testament, Bahá'u'lláh discloses the intention of this verse. He states: "The object of this sacred verse is none other except the Most Mighty Branch." The "Most Mighty Branch" is one of the titles conferred by Bahá'u'lláh on 'Abdu'l-Bahá. (See also notes 66 and 184.)

146. In the Bayán it had been forbidden you to ask Us questions. #126

The Báb forbade His followers to ask questions of Him Whom God will make manifest (Bahá'u'lláh), unless their questions were submitted in writing and pertained to subjects worthy of His lofty station. See Selections from the Writings of the Báb.

Bahá'u'lláh removes this prohibition of the Báb. He invites the believers to ask such questions as they "need to ask", and He cautions them to refrain from posing "idle questions" of the kind which preoccupied "the men of former times".

147. The number of months in a year, appointed in the Book of God, is nineteen. #127

The Bahá'í year, in accordance with the Badí calendar, consists of nineteen months of nineteen days each, with the addition of certain intercalary days (four in an ordinary year and five in a leap year) between the eighteenth and nineteenth months in order to adjust the calendar to the solar year. The Báb named the months after certain attributes of God. The Bahá'í New Year, Naw-Rúz, is astronomically fixed, coinciding with the March equinox (see note 26). For further details, including the names of the days of the week and the months, see the section on the Bahá'í calendar in The Bahá'í World, volume XVIII.

148. the first hath been adorned with this Name which overshadoweth the whole of creation #127

In the Persian Bayán, the Báb bestowed the name "Bahá" on the first month of the year (see note 139).

149. The Lord hath decreed that the dead should be interred in coffins #128

In the Bayán, the Báb prescribed that the deceased should be interred in a coffin made of crystal or polished stone. Shoghi Effendi, in a letter written on his behalf, explained that the significance of this provision was to show respect for the human body which "was once exalted by the immortal soul of man".

In brief, the Bahá'í law for the burial of the dead states that it is forbidden to carry the body for more than one hour's journey from the place of death; that the body should be wrapped in a shroud of silk or cotton, and on its finger should be placed a ring bearing the inscription "I came forth from God, and return unto Him, detached from all save Him, holding fast to His Name, the Merciful, the Compassionate"; and that the coffin should be of crystal, stone or hard fine wood. A specific Prayer for the Dead (see note 10) is ordained, to be said before interment. As affirmed by 'Abdu'l-Bahá and the Guardian, this law precludes cremation of the dead. The formal prayer and the ring are meant to be used for those who have attained the age of maturity, i.e. 15 years of age (Q and A 70).

With regard to the material from which the coffin is to be made, the spirit of the law is that coffins should be of as durable a material as possible. Hence, the Universal House of Justice has explained that, in addition to the materials specified in the Aqdas, there is no objection to using the hardest wood available or concrete for the casket. For the present, the Bahá'ís are left free to make their own choices in this matter.

150. the Point of the Bayán #129

The "Point of the Bayán" is one of the titles by which the Báb referred to Himself.

151. the deceased should be enfolded in five sheets of silk or cotton #130

In the Bayán, the Báb specified that the body of the deceased should be wrapped in five sheets of silk or cotton. Bahá'u'lláh confirmed this provision and added the stipulation that for "those whose means are limited a single sheet of either fabric will suffice".

When asked whether the "five sheets" mentioned in the law referred to "five full-length shrouds" or "five cloths which were hitherto customarily used", Bahá'u'lláh responded that the intention is the "use of five cloths" (Q and A 56).

Concerning the way in which the body should be wrapped, there is nothing in the Bahá'í Writings to define how the wrapping of the body is to be done, either when "five cloths" are used or only "a single sheet". At present, the Bahá'ís are free to use their judgement in the matter.

152. It is forbidden you to transport the body of the deceased a greater distance than one hour’s journey from the city #130

The intention of this command is to limit the duration of the journey to one hour’s time, irrespective of the means of transport that are chosen to carry the body to the burial site. Bahá’u’lláh affirms that the sooner the burial takes place, "the more fitting and acceptable will it be" (Q and A 16).

The place of death may be taken to encompass the city or town in which the person passes away, and therefore the one hour’s journey may be calculated from the city limits to the place of burial. The spirit of Bahá’u’lláh’s law is for the deceased to be buried near where he or she dies.

153. God hath removed the restrictions on travel that had been imposed in the Bayán. #131

The Báb decreed certain restrictions on travel which were to remain in force until the advent of the Promised One of the Bayán, at which time the believers were instructed to set out, even if on foot, to meet Him, since the attainment of His presence was the fruit and purpose of their very existence.

154. Raise up and exalt the two Houses in the Twin Hallowed Spots, and the other sites wherein the throne of your Lord ... hath been established. #133

Bahá'u'lláh identifies the "two Houses" as His House in Baghdád, designated by Him as the "Most Great House", and the House of the Báb in Shíráz, both of which have been ordained by Him as sites of pilgrimage. (See Q and A 29, 32 and note 54.)

Shoghi Effendi explained that "the other sites wherein the throne of your Lord ... hath been established" refers to those places where the Person of the Manifestation of God has resided. Bahá'u'lláh states that "the people of the areas where these are situated may choose to preserve either each house" wherein He resided, "or one of them" (Q and A 32). Bahá'í institutions have identified, documented, and where possible, acquired and restored a number of the historical sites associated with the Twin Manifestations.

155. Take heed lest ye be prevented by aught that hath been recorded in the Book from hearkening unto this, the Living Book #134

The "Book" is the record of the revealed Word of the Manifestations of God. The "Living Book" is a reference to the Person of the Manifestation.

These words contain an allusion to a statement of the Báb in the Persian Bayán about the "Living Book", which He identifies as Him Whom God will make manifest. In one of His Tablets Bahá'u'lláh Himself states: "The Book of God hath been sent down in the form of this Youth."

In this verse of the Aqdas, and again in paragraph 168 of the Aqdas, Bahá'u'lláh refers to Himself as the "Living Book". He cautions the "followers of every other Faith" against seeking "reasons in their Holy Books" for refuting the utterances of the "Living Book". He admonishes the people not to allow what has been recorded in the "Book" to prevent them from recognising His Station and from holding fast to what is in this new Revelation.

156. tribute to this Revelation, from the Pen of Him Who was My Herald #135

The "tribute" that Bahá'u'lláh quotes in this passage is from the Arabic Bayán.

157. "The Qiblih is indeed He Whom God will make manifest; whenever He moveth, it moveth, until He shall come to rest." #137

For a discussion of this verse see notes 7 and 8.

158. It is unlawful to enter into marriage save with a believer in the Bayán. Should only one party to a marriage embrace this Cause, his or her possessions will become unlawful to the other #139

The passage of the Bayán which Bahá'u'lláh here quotes draws the attention of the believers to the imminence of the coming of "Him Whom God will make manifest". Its prohibition of marriage with a non-Bábí and its provision that the property of a husband or wife who embraced the Faith could not lawfully pass to the non-Bábí spouse were explicitly held in abeyance by the Báb, and were subsequently annulled by Bahá'u'lláh before they could come into effect. Bahá'u'lláh, in quoting this law, points to the fact that, in revealing it, the Báb had clearly anticipated the possibility that the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh would rise to prominence before that of the Báb Himself.

In God Passes By Shoghi Effendi points out that the Bayán "should be regarded primarily as a eulogy of the Promised One rather than a code of laws and ordinances designed to be a permanent guide to future generations". "Designedly severe in the rules and regulations it imposed," he continues, "revolutionizing in the principles it instilled, calculated to awaken from their age-long torpor the clergy and the people, and to administer a sudden and fatal blow to obsolete and corrupt institutions, it proclaimed, through its drastic provisions, the advent of the anticipated Day, the Day when 'the Summoner shall summon to a stern business', when He will 'demolish whatever hath been before Him, even as the Apostle of God demolished the ways of those that

preceded Him’" (see also note 109).

159. The Point of the Bayán #140

One of the titles of the Báb.

160. Verily, there is none other God besides Me #143

The Bahá'í Writings contain many passages that elucidate the nature of the Manifestation and His relationship to God. Bahá'u'lláh underlines the unique and transcendent nature of the Godhead. He explains that "since there can be no tie of direct intercourse to bind the one true God with His creation" God ordains that "in every age and dispensation a pure and stainless Soul be made manifest in the kingdoms of earth and heaven". This "mysterious and ethereal Being", the Manifestation of God, has a human nature which pertains to "the world of matter" and a spiritual nature "born of the substance of God Himself". He is also endowed with a "double station":

> The first station, which is related to His innermost reality, representeth Him as One Whose voice is the voice of God Himself... The second station is the human station, exemplified by the following verses: "I am but a man like you." "Say, praise be to my Lord! Am I more than a man, an apostle?"

Bahá'u'lláh also affirms that, in the spiritual realm, there is an "essential unity" between all the Manifestations of God. They all reveal the "Beauty of God", manifest His names and attributes, and give utterance to His Revelation. In this regard, He states:

> Were any of the all-embracing Manifestations of God to declare: "I am God", He, verily, speaketh the truth, and no doubt attacheth thereto. For it hath been repeatedly demonstrated that through their Revelation,

> their attributes and names, the Revelation of God, His names and His attributes, are made manifest in the world...

While the Manifestations reveal the names and attributes of God and are the means by which humanity has access to the knowledge of God and His Revelation, Shoghi Effendi states that the Manifestations should "never ... be identified with that invisible Reality, the Essence of Divinity itself". In relation to Bahá'u'lláh, the Guardian wrote that the "human temple that has been the vehicle of so overpowering a Revelation" is not to be identified with the "Reality" of God.

Concerning the uniqueness of Bahá'u'lláh's station and the greatness of His Revelation, Shoghi Effendi affirms that the prophetic statements concerning the "Day of God", found in the Sacred Scriptures of past Dispensations, are fulfilled by the advent of Bahá'u'lláh:

> To Israel He was neither more nor less than the incarnation of the "Everlasting Father", the "Lord of Hosts" come down "with ten thousands of saints"; to Christendom Christ returned "in the glory of the Father"; to Sh̲í'ah Islám the return of the Imám Ḥusayn; to Sunní Islám the descent of the "Spirit of God" (Jesus Christ); to the Zoroastrians the promised Sh̲áh-Bahrám; to the Hindus the reincarnation of Krishna; to the Buddhists the fifth Buddha.

Bahá'u'lláh describes the station of "Divinity" which He shares with all the Manifestations of God as

> ...the station in which one dieth to himself and liveth in God. Divinity, whenever I mention it, indicateth My complete and absolute self-effacement. This is the station in which I have no control over mine own weal or woe nor over my life nor over my

resurrection.

And, regarding His own relationship to God, He testifies:

> When I contemplate, O my God, the relationship that bindeth me to Thee, I am moved to proclaim to all created things "verily I am God"; and when I consider my own self, lo, I find it coarser than clay!

161. payment of Zakát #146

Zakát is referred to in the Qur'án as a regular charity binding upon Muslims. In due course the concept evolved into a form of alms-tax which imposed the obligation to give a fixed portion of certain categories of income, beyond specified limits, for the relief of the poor, for various charitable purposes, and to aid the Faith of God. The limit of exemption varied for different commodities, as did the percentage payable on the portion assessable.

Bahá'u'lláh states that the Bahá'í law of Zakát follows "what hath been revealed in the Qur'án" (Q and A 107). Since such issues as the limits for exemption, the categories of income concerned, the frequency of payments, and the scale of rates for the various categories of Zakát are not mentioned in the Qur'án, these matters will have to be set forth in the future by the Universal House of Justice. Shoghi Effendi has indicated that pending such legislation the believers should, according to their means and possibilities, make regular contributions to the Bahá'í Fund.

162. It is unlawful to beg, and it is forbidden to give to him who beggeth. #147

In a Tablet ‘Abdu’l-Bahá expounds the meaning of this verse. He states that "mendicancy is forbidden and that giving charity to people who take up begging as their profession is also prohibited". He further points out in that same Tablet: "The object is to uproot mendicancy altogether. However, if a person is incapable of earning a living, is stricken by dire poverty or becometh helpless, then it is incumbent on the wealthy or the Deputies to provide him with a monthly allowance for his subsistence... By ‘Deputies’ is meant the representatives of the people, that is to say the members of the House of Justice."

The prohibition against giving charity to people who beg does not preclude individuals and Spiritual Assemblies from extending financial assistance to the poor and needy or from providing them with opportunities to acquire such skills as would enable them to earn a livelihood (see note 56).

163. A fine ... had formerly been prescribed ... for anyone who was the cause of sadness to another #148

Bahá'u'lláh abrogates the law of the Persian Bayán concerning the payment of a fine in reparation for causing sadness to one's neighbour.

164. the sacred Lote-Tree # 148

The "sacred Lote-Tree" is a reference to the Sadratu'l-Muntahá, the "Tree beyond which there is no passing" (see note 128). It is used here symbolically to designate Bahá'u'lláh.

165. Recite ye the verses of God every morn and eventide. #149

Bahá'u'lláh states that the essential "requisite" for reciting "the verses of God" is the "eagerness and love" of the believers to "read the Word of God" (Q and A 68).

With regard to the definition of "verses of God", Bahá'u'lláh states that it refers to "all that hath been sent down from the Heaven of Divine Utterance". Shoghi Effendi, in a letter written to one of the believers in the East, has clarified that the term "verses of God" does not include the writings of 'Abdu'l-Bahá; he has likewise indicated that this term does not apply to his own writings.

166. Ye have been enjoined to renew the furnishings of your homes after the passing of each nineteen years #151

Bahá'u'lláh confirms the injunction in the Arabic Bayán regarding the renewal, every nineteen years, of the furnishings of one's home, provided one is able to do so. 'Abdu'l-Bahá relates this ordinance to the promotion of refinement and cleanliness. He explains that the purpose of the law is that one should change those furnishings that become old, lose their lustre and provoke repugnance. It does not apply to such things as rare or treasured articles, antiques or jewellery.

167. Wash your feet #152

The believers are exhorted in the Kitáb-i-Aqdas to bathe regularly, to wear clean clothes and generally to be the essence of cleanliness and refinement. The Synopsis and Codification, section IV.D.3.y.i.-vii., summarizes the relevant provisions. In relation to the washing of the feet, Bahá'u'lláh states that it is preferable to use warm water; however, washing in cold water is also permissible (Q and A 97).

168. Ye have been prohibited from making use of pulpits. Whoso wisheth to recite unto you the verses of his Lord, let him sit on a chair placed upon a dais #154

These provisions have their antecedent in the Persian Bayán. The Báb forbade the use of pulpits for the delivery of sermons and the reading of the Text. He specified, instead, that to enable all to hear the Word of God clearly, a chair for the speaker should be placed upon a platform.

In comments on this law, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá and Shoghi Effendi have made it clear that in the Mashriqu’l-Adhkár (where sermons are prohibited and only the words of Holy Scripture may be read) the reader may stand or sit, and if necessary to be better heard, may use a low moveable platform, but that no pulpit is permitted. In the case of meetings in places other than the Mashriqu’l-Adhkár, it is also permissible for the reader or speaker to sit or stand, and to use a platform. In one of His Tablets, when reiterating the prohibition of the use of pulpits in any location, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá has stressed that when Bahá’ís deliver their speeches in gatherings, they are to do so in an attitude of utmost humility and self-abnegation.

169. Gambling #155

The activities that are included in this prohibition have not been outlined in the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh. As both 'Abdu'l-Bahá and Shoghi Effendi have indicated, it is left to the Universal House of Justice to specify the details of this prohibition. In response to questions about whether lotteries, betting on such things as horse races and football games, bingo, and the like, are included under the prohibition of gambling, the Universal House of Justice has indicated that this is a matter that will be considered in detail in the future. In the meantime, the Assemblies and individuals are counselled not to make an issue of these matters and to leave it to the conscience of the individual believers.

The House of Justice has ruled that it is not appropriate for funds for the Faith to be raised through lotteries, raffles, and games of chance.

170. the use of opium ... any substance that induceth sluggishness and torpor #155

This prohibition of the use of opium is reiterated by Bahá'u'lláh in the final paragraph of the Kitáb-i-Aqdas. In this connection, Shoghi Effendi stated that one of the requirements for "a chaste and holy life" is "total abstinence ... from opium, and from similar habit-forming drugs". Heroin, hashish and other derivatives of cannabis such as marijuana, as well as hallucinogenic agents such as LSD, peyote and similar substances, are regarded as falling under this prohibition.

'Abdu'l-Bahá has written:

> As to opium, it is foul and accursed. God protect us from the punishment He inflicteth on the user. According to the explicit Text of the Most Holy Book, it is forbidden, and its use is utterly condemned. Reason showeth that smoking opium is a kind of insanity, and experience attesteth that the user is completely cut off from the human kingdom. May God protect all against the perpetration of an act so hideous as this, an act which layeth in ruins the very foundation of what it is to be human, and which causeth the user to be dispossessed for ever and ever. For opium fasteneth on the soul so that the user's conscience dieth, his mind is blotted away, his perceptions are eroded. It turneth the living into the dead. It quencheth the natural heat. No greater harm can be conceived than that which opium inflicteth. Fortunate are they who never even speak the name of it; then think how wretched is the user.

> O ye lovers of God! In this, the cycle of Almighty God, violence and force, constraint and oppression, are one and all condemned. It is, however, mandatory that the use of opium be prevented by any means whatsoever, that perchance the human race may be delivered from this most powerful of plagues. And otherwise, woe and misery to whoso falleth short of his duty to his Lord.

In one of His Tablets ‘Abdu’l-Bahá has stated concerning opium: "the user, the buyer and the seller are all deprived of the bounty and grace of God".

In yet another Tablet, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá has written:

> Regarding hashish you have pointed out that some Persians have become habituated to its use. Gracious God! This is the worst of all intoxicants, and its prohibition is explicitly revealed. Its use causeth the disintegration of thought and the complete torpor of the soul. How could anyone seek the fruit of the infernal tree, and by partaking of it, be led to exemplify the qualities of a monster? How could one use this forbidden drug, and thus deprive himself of the blessings of the All-Merciful? Alcohol consumeth the mind and causeth man to commit acts of absurdity, but this opium, this foul fruit of the infernal tree, and this wicked hashish extinguish the mind, freeze the spirit, petrify the soul, waste the body and leave man frustrated and lost.

It should be noted that the above prohibition against taking certain classes of drugs does not forbid their use when prescribed by qualified physicians as part of a medical treatment.

171. the "mystery of the Great Reversal in the Sign of the Sovereign" #157

Sh̲aykh̲ Aḥmad-i-Ahsá'í (1753-1831), who was the founder of the Sh̲aykh̲í School and the first of the "twin luminaries that heralded the advent of the Faith of the Báb", prophesied that at the appearance of the Promised One all things would be reversed, the last would be first, the first last. Bahá'u'lláh in one of His Tablets refers to the "symbol and allusion" of the "mystery of the Great Reversal in the Sign of the Sovereign". He states: "Through this reversal He hath caused the exalted to be abased and the abased to be exalted", and He recalls that "in the days of Jesus, it was those who were distinguished for their learning, the men of letters and religion, who denied Him, whilst humble fishermen made haste to gain admittance into the Kingdom" (see also note 172). For additional information about Sh̲aykh̲ Aḥmad-i-Ahsá'í see The Dawn-Breakers, chapters 1 and 10.

172. the "Six" raised up by virtue of this "Upright Alif" #157

In his writings, Shaykh Aḥmad-i-Ahsá'í placed great emphasis on the Arabic letter "Váv". In The Dawn-Breakers, Nabíl states that this letter "symbolized for the Báb the advent of a new cycle of Divine Revelation, and has since been alluded to by Bahá'u'lláh in the Kitáb-i-Aqdas in such passages as 'the mystery of the Great Reversal' and 'the Sign of the Sovereign'".

The name for the letter "Váv" consists of three letters: Váv, Alif, Váv. According to the abjad reckoning, the numerical value of each of these letters is 6, 1 and 6 respectively. Shoghi Effendi in a letter written on his behalf to one of the believers in the East provides an interpretation of this verse of the Aqdas. He states that the "Upright Alif" refers to the advent of the Báb. The first letter with its value of six, which comes before the Alif, is a symbol of earlier Dispensations and Manifestations which predate the Báb, while the third letter, which also has a numerical value of six, stands for Bahá'u'lláh's supreme Revelation which was made manifest after the Alif.

173. It hath been forbidden you to carry arms unless essential #159

Bahá'u'lláh confirms an injunction contained in the Bayán which makes it unlawful to carry arms, unless it is necessary to do so. With regard to circumstances under which the bearing of arms might be "essential" for an individual, 'Abdu'l-Bahá gives permission to a believer for self-protection in a dangerous environment. Shoghi Effendi in a letter written on his behalf has also indicated that, in an emergency, when there is no legal force at hand to appeal to, a Bahá'í is justified in defending his life. There are a number of other situations in which weapons are needed and can be legitimately used; for instance, in countries where people hunt for their food and clothing, and in such sports as archery, marksmanship, and fencing.

On the societal level, the principle of collective security enunciated by Bahá'u'lláh (see Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh, CXVII) and elaborated by Shoghi Effendi (see the Guardian's letters in The World Order of Bahá'u'lláh) does not presuppose the abolition of the use of force, but prescribes "a system in which Force is made the servant of Justice", and which provides for the existence of an international peace-keeping force that "will safeguard the organic unity of the whole commonwealth". In the Tablet of Bisḥárát, Bahá'u'lláh expresses the hope that "weapons of war throughout the world may be converted into instruments of reconstruction and that strife and conflict may be removed from the midst of men".

In another Tablet Bahá'u'lláh stresses the importance of fellowship with the followers of all religions; He also states that "the law of holy war hath been blotted out

from the Book".

174. and permitted you to attire yourselves in silk #159

According to Islamic practice, the wearing of silk by men was generally forbidden, except in times of holy war. This prohibition, which was not based on the verses of the Qur'án, was abrogated by the Báb.

175. The Lord hath relieved you ... of the restrictions that formerly applied to clothing and to the trim of the beard. #159

Many rules about dress had their origins in the laws and traditional practices of the world's religions. For example, the Sh̲í̲'ih clergy adopted for themselves a distinctive headdress and robes and, at one time, forbade the people to adopt European attire. Muslim practice, in its desire to emulate the custom of the Prophet, also introduced a number of restrictions with regard to the trim of the moustache and the length of the beard.

Bahá'u'lláh removed such limitations on one's apparel and beard. He leaves such matters to the "discretion" of the individual, and at the same time calls upon the believers not to transgress the bounds of propriety and to exercise moderation in all that pertains to dress.

176. O Land of Káf and Rá! #164

Káf and Rá are the first two consonants of Kirmán, the name of a city and province of Iran.

177. We perceive that which secretly and stealthily diffuseth from thee. #164

This passage is a reference to the intrigues of a group of Azalís, followers of Mírzá Yaḥyá (see note 190), associated with the city of Kirmán. They include Mullá Ja'far, his son Sẖaykẖ Aḥmad-i-Rúhí and Mírzá Áqá Kẖán-i-Kirmání (both sons-in-law of Mírzá Yaḥyá), as well as Mírzá Aḥmad-i-Kirmání. They not only sought to undermine the Faith, but involved themselves in political intrigues which culminated in the assassination of Náṣiri'd-Dín Sẖáh.

178. Call ye to mind the sh̲aykh̲ whose name was Muḥammad-Ḥasan #166

Sh̲aykh̲ Muḥammad-Ḥasan, one of the leading exponents of Sh̲í'ih Islám, rejected the Báb. The author of voluminous writings on Sh̲í'ih jurisprudence, he is reported to have died around 1850.

Nabíl, in The Dawn-Breakers, describes the encounter that took place in Najaf between Mullá 'Alíy-i-Bastamí, one of the Letters of the Living, and Sh̲aykh̲ Muḥammad-Ḥasan. During the meeting, Mullá 'Alí announced the manifestation of the Báb and extolled the potency of His Revelation. At the instigation of the sh̲aykh̲, Mullá 'Alí was forthwith pronounced a heretic and expelled from the assembly. He was put on trial, transported to Istanbul, and condemned to hard labour.

179. a sifter of wheat and barley # 166

This is an allusion to Mullá Muḥammad Ja’far Gandum-Pák-Kun, the first person in Iṣfáhán to accept the Faith of the Báb. He is mentioned in the Persian Bayán and praised as one who "donned the robe of discipleship". In The Dawn-Breakers, Nabíl describes the unreserved acceptance of the Message by the "sifter of wheat" and his zealous advocacy of the new Revelation. He joined the company of the defenders of the Fort of Sh̲ayḵh̲ Tabarsí and perished during that siege.

180. Take heed lest the word "Prophet" withhold you from this Most Great Announcement #167

Bahá'u'lláh cautions people "of insight" not to allow their interpretations of the Holy Scriptures to prevent them from recognizing the Manifestation of God. Followers of each religion have tended to allow their devotion to its Founder to cause them to perceive His Revelation as the final Word of God and to deny the possibility of the appearance of any subsequent Prophet. This has been the case of Judaism, Christianity and Islám. Bahá'u'lláh denies the validity of this concept of finality both in relation to past Dispensations and to His own. With regard to Muslims, He wrote in the Kitáb-i-Iqán that the "people of the Qur'án ... have allowed the words 'Seal of the Prophets' to veil their eyes", "to obscure their understanding, and deprive them of the grace of all His manifold bounties". He affirms that "this theme hath ... been a sore test unto all mankind", and laments the fate of "those who, clinging unto these words, have disbelieved in Him Who is their true Revealer". The Báb refers to this same theme when He warns: "Let not names shut you out as by a veil from Him Who is their Lord, even the name Prophet, for such a name is but a creation of His utterance."

181. any reference to "Vicegerency" debar you from the sovereignty of Him Who is the Vicegerent of God #167

The word here translated "Vicegerency" is, in the original Arabic, "viláyat", which has a range of meanings including "vicegerency", "guardianship", "protectorship" and "successorship". It is used in relation to God Himself, to His Manifestation, or to those who are the appointed Successors of a Manifestation.

In this verse of the Aqdas, Bahá'u'lláh warns against allowing such concepts to blind one to the "sovereignty" of the new Divine Manifestation, the true "Vicegerent of God".

182. Call ye to mind Karím #170

Ḥájí Mírzá Muḥammad Karím Kẖán-i-Kirmání (1810-circa 1873) was the self-appointed leader of the Sẖaykẖí community after the death of Siyyid Kázim, who was the appointed successor to Sẖaykẖ Aḥmad-i-Ahsá'í (see notes 171 and 172). He dedicated himself to the promotion of the teachings of Sẖaykẖ Aḥmad. The opinions he expressed became the subject of controversy among his supporters and opponents alike.

Regarded as one of the leading savants and prolific authors of his age, he composed numerous books and epistles in the various fields of learning that were cultivated in those times. He actively opposed both the Báb and Bahá'u'lláh, and used his treatises to attack the Báb and His Teachings. In the Kitáb-i-Iqán, Bahá'u'lláh condemns the tone and content of his writings and singles out for criticism one of his works which contains negative allusions to the Báb. Shoghi Effendi describes him as "inordinately ambitious and hypocritical" and describes how he "at the special request of the Sẖáh had in a treatise viciously attacked the new Faith and its doctrines".

183. O ye the learned ones in Bahá #173

Bahá'u'lláh eulogizes the learned among His followers. In the Book of His Covenant, He wrote: "Blessed are the rulers and learned among the people of Bahá." Referring to this statement, Shoghi Effendi has written:

> In this holy cycle the "learned" are, on the one hand, the Hands of the Cause of God, and, on the other, the teachers and diffusers of His Teachings who do not rank as Hands, but who have attained an eminent position in the teaching work. As to the "rulers" they refer to the members of the Local, National and International Houses of Justice. The duties of each of these souls will be determined in the future.

The Hands of the Cause of God were individuals appointed by Bahá'u'lláh and charged with various duties, especially those of protecting and propagating His Faith. In Memorials of the Faithful 'Abdu'l-Bahá referred to other outstanding believers as Hands of the Cause, and in His Will and Testament He included a provision calling upon the Guardian of the Faith to appoint Hands of the Cause at his discretion. Shoghi Effendi first raised posthumously a number of the believers to the rank of Hands of the Cause, and during the latter years of his life appointed a total of 32 believers from all continents to this position. In the period between the passing of Shoghi Effendi in 1957 and the election of the Universal House of Justice in 1963, the Hands of the Cause directed the affairs of the Faith in their capacity as Chief Stewards of Bahá'u'lláh's embryonic World Commonwealth (see note

67). In November 1964, the Universal House of Justice determined that it could not legislate to make it possible to appoint Hands of the Cause. Instead, by a decision of the House of Justice in 1968, the functions of the Hands of the Cause in relation to protecting and propagating the Faith were extended into the future by the creation of the Continental Boards of Counsellors, and in 1973 through the establishment of the International Teaching Centre, which has its seat in the Holy Land.

The Universal House of Justice appoints the Counsellor members of the International Teaching Centre and the Continental Counsellors. Members of Auxiliary Boards are appointed by the Continental Counsellors. All these individuals fall within the definition of the "learned" given by Shoghi Effendi in the statement quoted above.

184. refer ye whatsoever ye understand not in the Book to Him Who hath branched from this mighty Stock #174

Bahá'u'lláh invests 'Abdu'l-Bahá with the right of interpreting His holy Writ (see also note 145).

185. the School of Transcendent Oneness #175

In this verse and the ones which immediately follow it, Bahá'u'lláh confronts one of the reasons some of the Bábís rejected His claim to be the Promised One of the Bayán. Their rejection was based on a Tablet addressed by the Báb to "Him Who will be made manifest" on the reverse side of which the Báb had written: "May the glances of Him Whom God shall make manifest illumine this letter at the primary school." This Tablet is published in Selections from the Writings of the Báb.

These Bábís maintained that, since Bahá'u'lláh was two years older than the Báb, it was not possible for Him to receive this Tablet "at the primary school".

Bahá'u'lláh here explains that the reference is to events transpiring in the spiritual worlds beyond this plane of existence.

186. We accepted the verses of God ... which He presented unto Us #175

In His Tablet addressed to "Him Who will be made manifest", the Báb characterizes the Bayán as an offering from Him to Bahá'u'lláh. See Selections from the Writings of the Báb.

187. O people of the Bayán! #176

Reference to the followers of the Báb.

188. the letters B and E were joined and knit together #177

Shoghi Effendi, in letters written on his behalf, has explained the significance of the "letters B and E". They constitute the word "Be", which, he states, "means the creative Power of God Who through His command causes all things to come into being" and "the power of the Manifestation of God, His great spiritual creative force".

The imperative "Be" in the original Arabic is the word "kun", consisting of the two letters "káf" and "nún". They have been translated by Shoghi Effendi in the above manner. This word has been used in the Qur'án as God's bidding calling creation into being.

189. this new World Order #181

In the Persian Bayán, the Báb stated: "Well is it with him who fixeth his gaze upon the Order of Bahá'u'lláh, and rendereth thanks unto his Lord. For He will assuredly be made manifest. God hath indeed irrevocably ordained it in the Bayán." Shoghi Effendi identifies this "Order" with the System Bahá'u'lláh envisages in the Aqdas, in which He testifies to its revolutionizing effect on the life of humanity and reveals the laws and principles which govern its operation.

The features of the "new World Order" are delineated in the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh and 'Abdu'l-Bahá and in the letters of Shoghi Effendi and the Universal House of Justice. The institutions of the present-day Bahá'í Administrative Order, which constitute the "structural basis" of Bahá'u'lláh's World Order, will mature and evolve into the Bahá'í World Commonwealth. In this regard, Shoghi Effendi affirms that the Administrative Order "will, as its component parts, its organic institutions, begin to function with efficiency and vigour, assert its claim and demonstrate its capacity to be regarded not only as the nucleus but the very pattern of the New World Order destined to embrace in the fullness of time the whole of mankind".

For additional information on the evolution of this new World Order, see, for example, the letters of Shoghi Effendi published in The World Order of Bahá'u'lláh.

190. O source of perversion! #184

This is a reference to Mírzá Yaḥyá, known as Subh-i-Azal (Morning of Eternity), a younger half-brother of Bahá'u'lláh, who arose against Him and opposed His Cause. Mírzá Yaḥyá was nominated by the Báb to serve as a figure-head for the Bábí community pending the imminent manifestation of the Promised One. At the instigation of Siyyid Muḥammad-i-Iṣfáhání (see note 192), Mírzá Yaḥyá betrayed the trust of the Báb, claimed to be His successor, and intrigued against Bahá'u'lláh, even attempting to have Him murdered. When Bahá'u'lláh formally declared His Mission to him in Adrianople, Mírzá Yaḥyá responded by going to the length of putting forward his own claim to be the recipient of an independent Revelation. His pretensions were eventually rejected by all but a few, who became known as Azalís (see note 177). He is described by Shoghi Effendi as the "Arch-Breaker of the Covenant of the Báb" (see God Passes By, chapter X).

191. remember how We nurtured thee by day and by night for service to the Cause #184

In *God Passes By*, Shoghi Effendi refers to the fact that Bahá'u'lláh, Who was thirteen years older than Mírzá Yaḥyá, had counselled him and watched over his early youth and manhood.

192. God hath laid hold on him who led thee astray. #184

A reference to Siyyid Muḥammad-i-Iṣfáhání, who is described by Shoghi Effendi as the "Antichrist of the Bahá'í Revelation". He was a man of corrupt character and great personal ambition who induced Mírzá Yaḥyá to oppose Bahá'u'lláh and to claim prophethood for himself (see note 190). Although he was an adherent of Mírzá Yaḥyá, Siyyid Muḥammad was exiled with Bahá'u'lláh to Akká. He continued to agitate and plot against Bahá'u'lláh. In describing the circumstances of his death, Shoghi Effendi has written in God Passes By:

> A fresh danger now clearly threatened the life of Bahá'u'lláh. Though He Himself had stringently forbidden His followers, on several occasions, both verbally and in writing, any retaliatory acts against their tormentors, and had even sent back to Beirut an irresponsible Arab convert, who had meditated avenging the wrongs suffered by his beloved Leader, seven of the companions clandestinely sought out and slew three of their persecutors, among whom were Siyyid Muḥammad and Áqá Ján.
>
> The consternation that seized an already oppressed community was indescribable. Bahá'u'lláh's indignation knew no bounds. "Were We", He thus voices His emotions, in a Tablet revealed shortly after this act had been committed, "to make mention of what befell Us, the heavens would be rent asunder and the mountains would crumble." "My captivity", He wrote on another occasion, "cannot harm Me. That which can harm Me is the conduct of those who love Me, who claim to be related to

Me, and yet perpetrate what causeth My heart and My pen to groan."

193. Select ye a single language ... adopt ye ... a common script. #189

Bahá'u'lláh enjoins the adoption of a universal language and script. His Writings envisage two stages in this process. The first stage is to consist of the selection of an existing language or an invented one which would then be taught in all the schools of the world as an auxiliary to the mother tongues. The governments of the world through their parliaments are called upon to effect this momentous enactment. The second stage, in the distant future, would be the eventual adoption of one single language and common script for all on earth.

194. We have appointed two signs for the coming of age of the human race #189

The first sign of the coming of age of humanity referred to in the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh is the emergence of a science which is described as that "divine philosophy" which will include the discovery of a radical approach to the transmutation of elements. This is an indication of the splendours of the future stupendous expansion of knowledge.

Concerning the "second" sign which Bahá'u'lláh indicates to have been revealed in the Kitáb-i-Aqdas, Shoghi Effendi states that Bahá'u'lláh, "...in His Most Holy Book, has enjoined the selection of a single language and the adoption of a common script for all on earth to use, an injunction which, when carried out, would, as He Himself affirms in that Book, be one of the signs of the 'coming of age of the human race'".

Further insight into this process of mankind's coming of age and proceeding to maturity is provided by the following statement of Bahá'u'lláh:

> One of the signs of the maturity of the world is that no one will accept to bear the weight of kingship. Kingship will remain with none willing to bear alone its weight. That day will be the day whereon wisdom will be manifested among mankind.

The coming of age of the human race has been associated by Shoghi Effendi with the unification of the whole of mankind, the establishment of a world commonwealth,

and an unprecedented stimulus to "the intellectual, the moral and spiritual life of the entire human race".

Glossary

‘Abdu’l-Bahá
The "Servant of Bahá", Abbás Effendi (1844-1921), the eldest son and appointed Successor of Bahá’u’lláh, and the Centre of His Covenant.
Abjad
The ancient Arabic system of allocating a numerical value to letters of the alphabet, so that numbers may be represented by letters and vice versa. Thus every word has both a literal meaning and a numerical value.
Báb, The
Literally the "Gate", the title assumed by Mírzá ‘Alí-Muḥammad (1819-1850) after the Declaration of His Mission in Sẖíráz in May 1844. He was the Founder of the Bábí Faith and the Herald of Bahá’u’lláh.
Bahá
Bahá means Glory. It is the Greatest Name of God and a title by which Bahá’u’lláh is designated. Also, the name of the first month of the Bahá’í year and of the first day of each Bahá’í month.
Bahá’u’lláh
The "Glory of God", title of Mírzá Ḥusayn-‘Alí

(1817-1892), the Founder of the Bahá'í Faith.

Bayán

The Bayán ("Exposition") is the title given by the Báb to His Book of Laws, and it is also applied to the entire body of His Writings. The Persian Bayán is the major doctrinal work and principal repository of the laws ordained by the Báb. The Arabic Bayán is parallel in content but smaller and less weighty. References in the annotations to subjects found in both the Persian Bayán and the Arabic Bayán are identified by use of the term "Bayán" without further qualification.

Ḥuqúqu'lláh

The "Right of God". Instituted in the Kitáb-i-Aqdas, it is an offering made by the Bahá'ís through the Head of the Faith for the purposes specified in the Bahá'í Writings.

Mashriqu'l-Adhkár

Literally "the Dawning-place of the praise of God", the designation of the Bahá'í House of Worship and its dependencies.

Mithqál

Nákhud

A unit of weight. See "mithqál".

Qayyúmu'l-Asmá

The Báb's commentary on the Súrih of Joseph in the Qur'án. Revealed in 1844, this work is characterized by Bahá'u'lláh as "the first, the greatest, and mightiest of all books" in the Bábí Dispensation.

Shoghi Effendi

Shoghi Effendi (1897-1957), Guardian of the Bahá'í Faith from 1921-1957. He was the eldest grandson of 'Abdu'l-Bahá and was appointed by Him as the Head of the Faith.

Síyáh-Chál

Literally "the Black Pit". The dark, foul-smelling, subterranean dungeon in Ṭihrán where Bahá'u'lláh was imprisoned for four months in 1852.

Footnotes

1. Napoleon III
2. Ṭihrán
3. Kẖurásán
4. The Báb
5. The Báb’s
6. Bahá’u’lláh
7. The Báb
8. The Báb
9. Bahá’u’lláh
10. Kirmán
11. The Báb
12. Bahá’u’lláh
13.

First month of the Islamic lunar calendar

14. In Arabic the two verses differ in gender

15. This relates to the minimum duration of a journey which exempts the traveller from fasting

16. The vernal equinox in the northern hemisphere

17. The Tablet containing the three Obligatory Prayers now in use

18. Qur'án 2:115

19. This refers to a volume of approximately one half of a cubic metre

20. Colour, taste and smell

21. Adrianople

22. The method of dividing the estate is to be applied in cases of intestacy. See item o. in this section

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